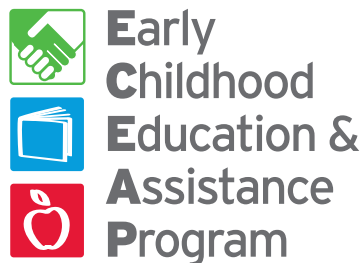


Report to the Legislature: ECEAP Expansion Plan Serving All Eligible Children by 2018-19

**Washington State Department of Early Learning
Office of Financial Management**

September 2013



Washington State Department of Early Learning

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Executive Summary

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a comprehensive preschool program for low-income children at higher risk for academic failure. The objectives of ECEAP, managed by the Department of Early Learning (DEL), are to:

- ▶ Achieve kindergarten readiness, including academic, social and health goals.
- ▶ Strengthen families' resilience.
- ▶ Foster family engagement in their child's learning experiences.

During the 2013 session, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5904, which directed DEL and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to submit a plan for expanding the current ECEAP program to serve all eligible children by the 2018-2019 school year, when it becomes an entitlement.

This report was limited to the directive of the legislation. Ideas that require future exploration and action such as raising eligibility levels, increasing classroom hours, integrating into family child care settings and evaluating ECEAP vendor rates are noted in future actions of the full report. DEL appreciates the ad hoc work group of ECEAP parents, contractors and other stakeholders including Head Start who provided input on the expansion strategy.

Action Since the 2013 Session

In the 2013-15 biennial budget, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$22 million to enhance and expand ECEAP. In state fiscal year 2014 (school year 2013-14), DEL added 350 ECEAP slots to underserved areas that also received state funds for full day kindergarten, ensured a four-year program review cycle and allowed monitoring of expansion sites. In state fiscal year 2015 (school year 2014-15), contractors will receive an average vendor rate increase of 10 percent. ECEAP will:

- ▶ Use Teaching Strategies GOLD® for child assessment.
- ▶ Increase professional development for lead teachers and family support specialists from 15 to 20 hours per year.
- ▶ Enter staff qualifications data in the Managed Education Registry and Information Tool (MERIT), our state's early learning professional development registry.
- ▶ Participate in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system.
- ▶ Phase in the use of Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessments for comprehensive program reviews, monitoring and continuous quality improvement.

DEL has continued to strengthen and integrate quality assurance processes to ensure early learning services focus on common child development and learning aims, respond to individual child and family needs, ensure a level of quality that delivers results and comply with program requirements. DEL will also use data from ECEAP Early Achievers ratings to inform comprehensive program reviews.

National Research

Research shows that a high-quality preschool experience can have a tremendous impact on a child's learning and development and can contribute to reductions in grade level retention and special education. Three key factors contribute to the extent that preschool benefits low-income children: program quality; the comprehensiveness of education, health and family services; and the dosage (the amount of time children and families participate). High-quality programs provide a combination of the following characteristics:

- ▶ Highly skilled teachers.
- ▶ Small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios.

- ▶ Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting.
- ▶ A language-rich environment.
- ▶ Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children.
- ▶ High and consistent levels of child participation.

The duration and intensity of preschool also contribute to children’s learning and development. Two years of preschool are more effective than one year, in achieving educational outcomes. New Jersey’s rigorously evaluated preschool program closed more than 50 percent of children’s achievement gap after one year, versus 18 percent for the “no Pre-K group.” Two years of participation roughly doubled the gain at second grade on most measures.

Comprehensive preschool services can improve children’s physical and mental health as well as their learning and development. Children living in poverty are more likely to experience highly stressful home environments and be exposed to violence, both of which are associated with negative health and developmental outcomes. Research also shows that family engagement in a child’s education is a key predictor of academic achievement. National research as well as a brief research project commissioned by DEL on best practices of six states implementing statewide programs (See Appendix C: State Best Practices Brief) confirm that:

- ▶ ECEAP is research-based. ECEAP Performance Standards draw on strong national research and longitudinal studies such as the Abecedarian, Chicago and Perry Preschool programs.
- ▶ High-quality preschool is cost effective. In 2013, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy presented data to the Senate Ways & Means Committee showing that every dollar invested in early childhood education for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds nets a return on investment of \$3.
- ▶ Expansion must balance aspiration and reality. The six states in the best practices review noted the importance of being realistic about the current supply of facilities, contractors and a qualified workforce when setting expansion goals and program standards. They particularly counseled strengthening of collaborative relationships with higher education to improve the pipeline of qualified teachers and other staff members.

ECEAP’s Comprehensive Preschool Design

Since 1985, ECEAP has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing education, nutrition, health and family support services. ECEAP reaches the children most in need of these foundations for learning. The program design includes the following key elements:

- ▶ Eligibility for children whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level or who are otherwise at-risk. Washington currently serves 37 percent of income-eligible children in ECEAP and Head Start.
- ▶ A minimum of 320 preschool classroom hours per year, over at least 30 weeks and at least 2.5 hours per session. A maximum class size of 20 students with the minimum adult-to-child ratio of 1:9.
- ▶ ECEAP contractors integrate ECEAP “slots” in a variety of settings in a mixed-delivery system.
- ▶ Children receive comprehensive services including: developmental, vision and hearing screening; immunization verification; health and mental health services coordination; and nutrition support.
- ▶ Families are engaged in the children’s classrooms, program governance, program quality monitoring, parenting education and family and community events.

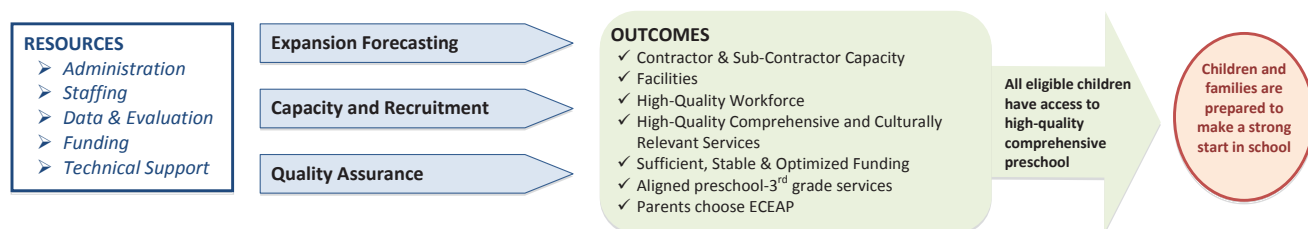
ECEAP's Fit in the Integrated System of Early Learning Opportunities

Some learning and development services (such as public school) are intended for all children, while others (such as subsidized child care) are available to some children because they are at-risk. Still other services (Early Support for Infants and Toddlers—ESIT—and ECEAP) are available to the few children with multiple risk factors. Early Achievers, preschool-through-third grade (P-3) alignment and other quality assurance structures support data-driven continuous quality improvement of these early learning services. The goal for Washington State's integrated system of early learning opportunities is to meet children's diverse needs as they develop and learn. A continuum of high-quality, easily accessible early learning opportunities respond to the individual needs of children and families based on age, developmental needs and desired learning settings. This allows for family choice and range of options in the types of early learning services they access including part-day, full-day and integrated options. ECEAP serves the few, most vulnerable, children.

Pillars of Success

The Theory of Action drives expansion outcomes. The three interconnected strategies support achievement of positive results for children and families.

ECEAP Expansion Theory of Action



Expansion Projections

Making ECEAP an entitlement provides exciting and challenging opportunities. The scale and scope of the expansion will require considerable preparation to ensure adequate pipelines of interested and qualified contractors, subcontractors, professionals and facilities to realize the envisioned expansion.

Important ECEAP expansion assumptions

1. ECEAP prioritizes serving the most vulnerable children and families.
2. ECEAP serves 3- and 4-year-old children because research shows that vulnerable children benefit from receiving two years of high-quality preschool.
3. DEL partners with ECEAP contractors and communities to reflect and respond to the unique character and needs of the populations they serve.
4. DEL estimates that 80 percent of families with 4-year-old children and 57 percent of families with 3-year-old children eligible for ECEAP and Head Start will choose to participate. These estimates are based on the experiences of other state-funded preschools.
5. All ECEAP contractors will participate in Early Achievers by 2014-2015, per House Bill 1723.
6. All strategies are contingent upon funding appropriated by the Legislature.

Guiding Principles for ECEAP Expansion

The following principles ensure an effective and high-quality expansion process:

1. Place slots first in communities with state-funded full day kindergarten that are underserved by ECEAP and Head Start. This is required by statute 43.215.142 and ensures we reach low-income children and families.
2. Focus on closing the opportunity gap that results in the academic achievement gap by:
 - Strengthening cultural competency and addressing the changing demographics of children served as ECEAP expands.
 - Ensuring ECEAP contractors meet minimum quality standards while expanding and enhancing services for children and families.
 - Reaching all communities with eligible children, including those in rural and remote areas and those furthest from opportunity.
3. Continue to deliver comprehensive education, health and family services necessary to improve child outcomes.
4. Broaden the existing mixed-delivery settings and organizations that provide ECEAP.
5. Strengthen the integration of the birth to 3rd grade early learning system as envisioned in our State's 10-Year Early Learning Plan. Continue alignment such as ECEAP's use of Teaching Strategies GOLD®, the same whole-child assessment used in the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS).
6. Address quality assurance and the use of data for continuous quality improvement. Identify funding for the infrastructure necessary to maintain high quality and culturally competent services.
7. Build on current contractor expertise to support rapid and high-quality expansion including mentoring new ECEAP contractors. Promote cooperation, collaboration and affiliation at contractor-, regional- and state-levels. Intentionally engage communities and potential participating families as part of expansion.
8. Value and encourage local in-kind and cash support, including facilities.

Caseload Forecast. DEL will continue to annually forecast caseloads using the methodology approved by OFM, which counts current ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start and American Indian/Alaskan Native Head Start slots. These processes indicate:

- ▶ 10,941 additional slots will be needed to serve eligible 3- and 4-year-olds by 2018-19 (in addition to the 350 ECEAP expansion slots the Legislature appropriated in FY14).
- ▶ Existing contractors can provide 6,641 of these slots in FY15-19 (including new subcontracts and expanded service areas).
- ▶ DEL will recruit new contractors to provide the remaining 4,300 slots to reach 10,941 slots.

Slots requested	SFY14	SFY15	SFY16	SFY17	SFY18	SFY19
Additional slots	350	1,350	2,398	2,398	2,398	2,397
Total slots	8,741	10,091	12,489	14,887	17,285	19,682
Cost of total ECEAP slots**	\$60,229,000	\$76,474,000	\$94,652,000	\$112,826,000	\$131,000,000	\$149,166,000
Additional appropriation needed	\$0	\$0	\$18,178,000	\$36,352,000	\$54,526,000	\$72,692,000
**Includes costs associated with rate increase in FY15. Base ECEAP appropriation for SFY16-19 is assumed to carry forward at SFY15 funding levels.						

Recruitment Plan

DEL currently provides 8,741 ECEAP slots through 39 contractors at 269 sites around the state. This Recruitment Plan is intended to help DEL build on existing infrastructure, workforce and capacities. DEL has defined “pathways” through which new contractors, subcontractors and staff members will come on board by 2018-2019.

Recruitment of New Contractors and Subcontractors. Prospective contractors must demonstrate minimum capacity and quality (See Contractor Characteristics). DEL and partners will provide orientations regarding ECEAP roles, responsibilities, contract requirements and standards, Early Learning Management System (ELMS) data entry and monitoring practices. DEL will engage new contractors who can provide a minimum of 240 slots. Head Start slots count toward this total. This contract size ensures ECEAP contractors have sufficient infrastructure to manage high-quality comprehensive services. 2013-14 ECEAP contractors are exempt from the minimum requirement of 240 slots. When applying for expansion, 2013-14 contractors that meet ECEAP requirements may be exempt from the minimum. DEL may negotiate nation-to-nation agreements with sovereign nations that meet the needs of individual Indian Nations and the interests of the state. DEL will encourage potential new ECEAP contractors that cannot provide that level of slots to participate as subcontractors through affiliation with a larger organization. Also, there is no minimum slot amount at a particular site, to allow access to services in smaller communities and through varied types of organizations. DEL will reach out to potential new ECEAP contractors and subcontractors of different types as a key component of expansion. (See ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways.)

Workforce Development and Staff Recruitment. A larger pool of qualified teachers, family support staff and health staff will be needed to expand ECEAP. Washington also needs to maintain highly capable staff that reflect children’s language and culture and have considerable experience. DEL will collaborate with higher education to strengthen course work and expand opportunities for experienced professionals to gain a degree. DEL will also work with state and regional partners to expand existing professional development and learning opportunities as described in the Washington Career Lattice. (See Figure 7: Workforce Development and Recruitment Pathways.)

Facility Development & Financing. Lack of appropriate facilities may be a barrier to reaching our expansion goals. In some locations, the expansion of state-funded full-day kindergarten may reduce the space currently used for ECEAP in existing school buildings. Some contractors and subcontractors in other settings may have existing facilities requiring little or no modification to meet standards. DEL will need a variety of ways to support local communities to develop and finance facilities. (See Figure 8: Facility Development and Financing Pathways.)

Oversight and Evaluation Design

Research shows that only high-quality programs achieve the results needed to close the opportunity and achievement gap. In addition, the changing demographics of our state require cultural and linguistic competence as hallmarks of high-quality programs. Achieving child outcomes requires focus on program quality and a data-driven continuous quality improvement process. To accomplish this, DEL must have:

- ▶ Adequate staff to analyze data, to refine program design and requirements based on data, to increase the intensity and frequency of contractor monitoring and to provide on-site coaching and technical assistance to contractors.
- ▶ Regional staff to oversee regional and local functions, consistent with the Lessons Learned best practices research. (See Figure 10: Distribution of Oversight and Quality Assurance.)

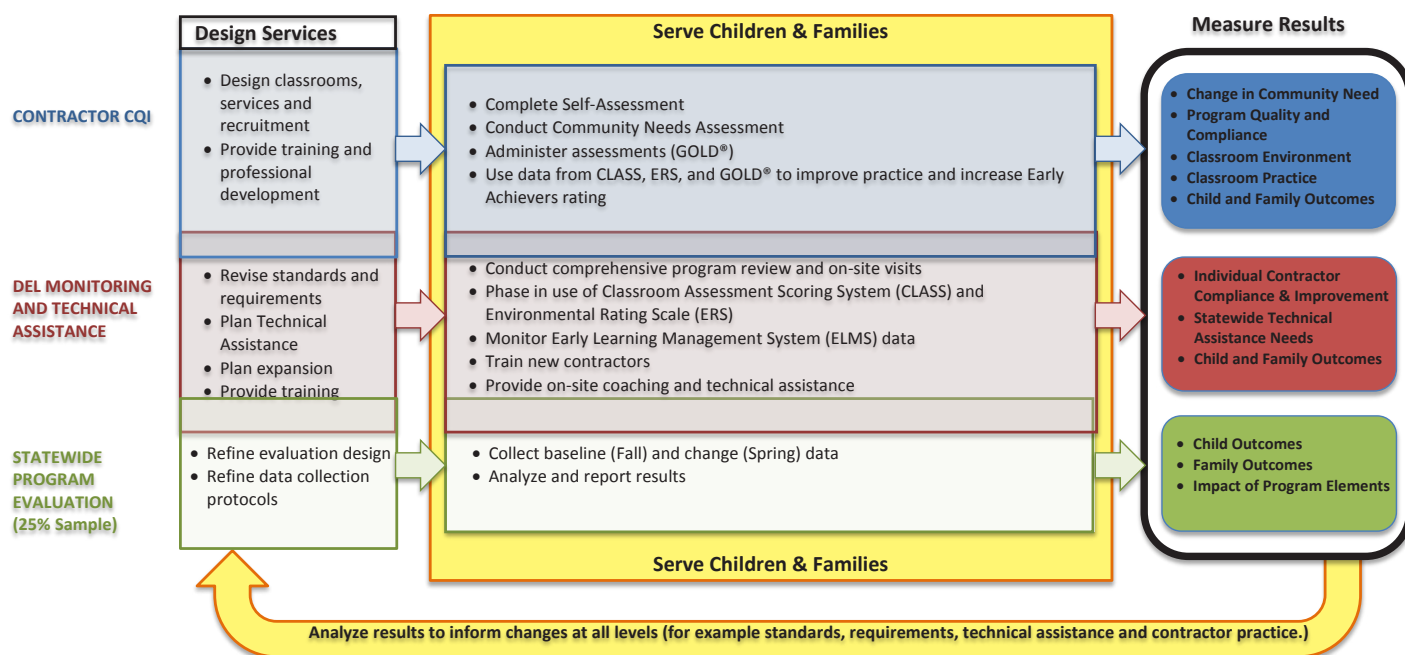
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), Monitoring and Evaluation. ECEAP measures outcomes that contribute to this: “Each participating child progresses farther in development and learning during the time in the program than they would if not participating.” Data gathered through enhanced program monitoring and comprehensive reviews, technical assistance requests and longitudinal evaluation guides program quality at the state, regional and local levels. (See ECEAP Oversight, Quality Assurance and Evaluation.)

Program Administration. DEL provides oversight, monitoring and quality assurance. By 2018-2019, DEL will locate some staff in early learning regions, which share the same boundaries as educational services districts with King and Pierce counties divided. Regional monitoring and technical assistance capacity will allow State Office staff to focus on contract and data management, comprehensive program reviews, statewide training needs, evaluation and system development (See Distribution of Oversight and Quality Assurance Functions).

As part of ECEAP expansion, DEL will need staff for ECEAP monitoring, quality assurance, program support, data analysis and information technology. DEL will maintain a staff level of one ECEAP FTE per 620 ECEAP slots by school year 2018-19. DEL may add additional FTEs a year prior to specific slot expansion targets to support high-quality implementation of ECEAP. DEL will adjust staffing assumptions based upon rate of expansion, changes to the program model and regionalization of quality assurance efforts. ECEAP will use the expertise of all DEL staff in expansion efforts and training needs.

Evaluation. An evaluation of the statewide program will occur every two years. The evaluation will include approximately 25 percent of ECEAP children, from around the state and employ a control group of children who have not received Head Start services. (See ECEAP Oversight, Quality Assurance and Evaluation.) Data gathered through the evaluation and continuous quality improvement processes will be used to target quality improvement efforts and to refine ECEAP requirements and program design.

ECEAP Continuous Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation



Together the independent evaluation, State monitoring and technical assistance and contractor continuous quality improvement processes provides data and insight so that:

- ECEAP providers implement the high-quality preschool services described in the *ECEAP Performance Standards*, which ensures that children and families receive the comprehensive services shown to generate results.
- Children experience cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and learning as described in the *Early Learning Guidelines* and as measured by *Teaching Strategies GOLD®*

ECEAP Expansion Plan

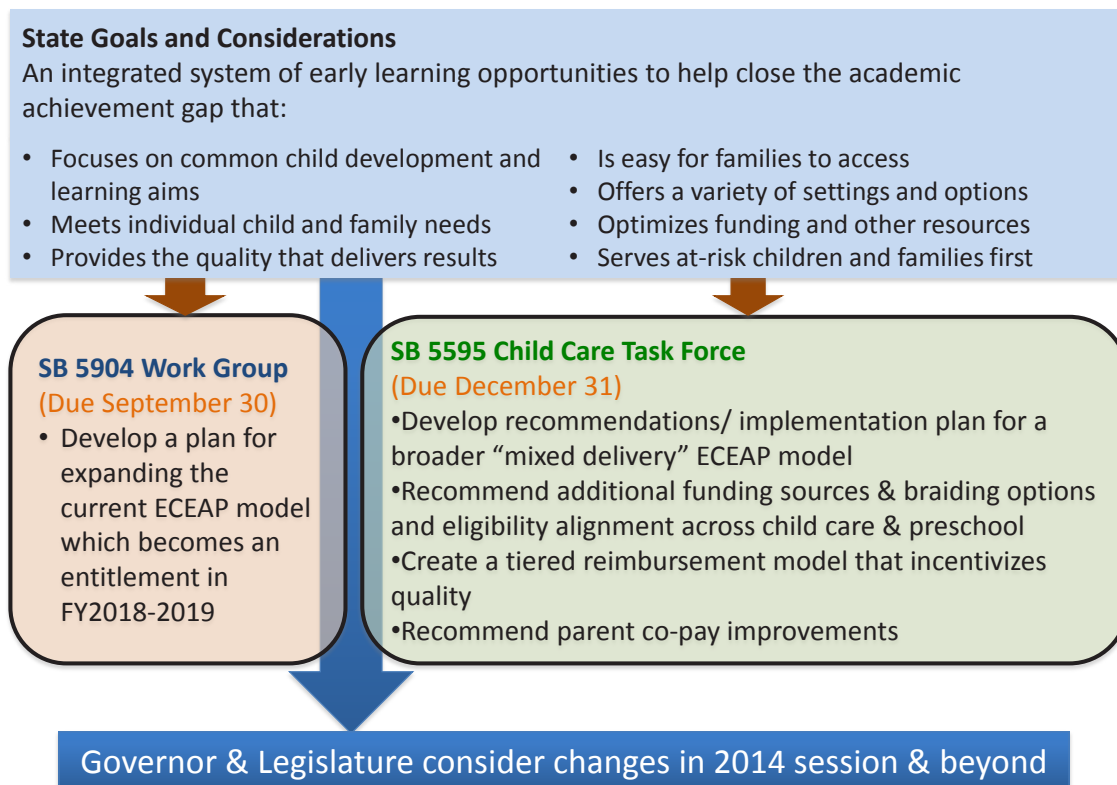
Background

During the 2013 session, the Legislature passed [Senate Bill 5904](#), which directed the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to submit a plan for expanding the current Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to serve all eligible children by the 2018-2019 school year, when it becomes an entitlement program.

This report was limited to the directive of the legislation. Ideas that require future exploration and action such as, raising eligibility levels, increasing classroom hours, integrating into family child care settings and evaluating ECEAP vendor rates are noted in the “Future Actions” section at the end of this plan. State legislators, the Governor, DEL and many stakeholders have also articulated future goals and considerations for the state’s early learning system. The task force created by [Senate Bill 5595](#) aims to address some of these goals, as well as related issues from [House Bill 1723](#) (see “State Goals and Considerations” in Figure 1: Early Learning Work Groups). Complex questions about how to strengthen integration of early learning services and enhancement of the ECEAP mixed-delivery system are being discussed in the 5595 Task Force. DEL has shared relevant ideas with this other early learning work group to ensure cross-pollination of thinking and coordination of conversations affecting ECEAP. (See interaction of these working groups noted in Figure 1).

To develop this plan, DEL convened an ad hoc work group of ECEAP parents, contractors and community partners and state, local and federal stakeholders including Head Start, to explore key expansion strategy questions and provide input. Because successful expansion hinges on eligible parents choosing ECEAP, the group has identified cultural competency considerations that can enhance ECEAP as it expands to better meet the needs of the changing population of young children and families in Washington.

Early Learning Work Groups



Action Since the 2013 Session

In the 2013-15 biennial budget, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$22 million to enhance and expand ECEAP. In state fiscal year 2014 (school year 2013-14), DEL added 350 ECEAP slots to underserved areas that also received state funds for full-day kindergarten. Additional monitoring and quality assurance dollars at DEL will ensure a four-year program review cycle and allow monitoring of expansion sites.

In school year 2014-15, ECEAP contractors will receive an average vendor rate increase of 10 percent. ECEAP will:

- ▶ Use Teaching Strategies GOLD® for child assessment.
- ▶ Increase professional development hours for lead teachers and family support specialists from 15 to 20 hours per year.
- ▶ Enter staff qualifications data in the Managed Education Registry and Information Tool (MERIT), our state's early learning professional development registry.
- ▶ Participate in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system.
- ▶ Phase in the use of Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and Environment Rating Scale (ERS) for comprehensive program reviews, monitoring and continuous quality improvement.

DEL has continued to strengthen and integrate quality assurance processes to ensure early learning services focus on common child development and learning aims, respond to individual child and family needs, ensure a level of quality that delivers results and comply with program requirements. DEL will use data from ECEAP Early Achievers ratings to inform comprehensive program reviews.

National Research

Research shows that a high-quality preschool experience can have a tremendous impact on a child's learning and development and can contribute to reductions in grade-level retention and special education¹. Three key factors contribute to the extent that preschool benefits low-income children: program quality; the comprehensiveness of education, health, and family services; and the dosage (the amount of time children and families participate). High-quality programs provide a combination of the following characteristics:

- ▶ Highly skilled teachers.
- ▶ Small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios.
- ▶ Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting.
- ▶ A language-rich environment.
- ▶ Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children.
- ▶ High and consistent levels of child participation².

The duration and intensity of preschool also contribute to children's learning and development. Two years of preschool are more effective than one year in achieving educational outcomes. New Jersey's rigorously evaluated preschool program closed more than 50 percent of children's achievement gap after one year, versus 18 percent for the "no pre-K group." Two years of participation roughly doubled the gain at second grade on most measures³.

¹ Barnett, S.W, Yung, K, Youn, M & Frede, E.C, *Executive Summary. Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up*. National Institute for Early Education Research Rutgers University. March 20, 2013.

² Crosnoe, R., Augustine J.M., Huston A.C., *Children's Early Child Care and Their Mothers' Later Involvement with Schools* Child Development March 2012. Published online 2012 February 7. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01726.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01726.x)

³ Frede, E, Kwanghee, J, Barnett, W.S., Figueras, A. "The APPLES Blossom: Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES) Preliminary Results through 2nd grade" (June 2009) http://nieer.org/pdf/apples_second_grade_result

Comprehensive preschool services can improve children’s physical and mental health as well as their learning and development⁴. Children living in poverty are more likely to experience highly stressful home environments and be exposed to violence, both of which are associated with negative health and developmental outcomes. Research also shows that family engagement in a child’s education is a key predictor of academic achievement. National research as well as a brief research project commissioned by DEL on best practices of six states implementing statewide programs (See Appendix C: State Best Practices Brief) confirm that:

- ▶ ECEAP is research-based. ECEAP Performance Standards draw on strong national research and longitudinal studies such as the Abecedarian, Chicago and Perry Preschool programs.
- ▶ High-quality preschool is cost effective. In 2013, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy presented data to the Senate Ways & Means Committee showing that every dollar invested in early childhood education for low-income 3 and 4-year-olds nets a return on investment of \$3.
- ▶ Expansion must balance aspiration and reality. The six states in the best practices review noted the importance of being realistic about the current supply of facilities, contractors and a qualified work force when setting expansion goals and program standards. They particularly counseled strengthening of collaborative relationships with higher education to improve the pipeline of qualified teachers and other staff members.

ECEAP’s Comprehensive Preschool Design

ECEAP is designed to prepare children from low-income families for success in school and in life. Since 1985, ECEAP has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing education, nutrition, health and family support services. ECEAP reaches the children most in need of these foundations for learning. The program design is aligned with the nationally researched programs that have shown positive return on investment. The program includes the following key elements:

- ▶ Eligibility for those whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level or otherwise at-risk (Washington currently serves 37 percent of income-eligible children through ECEAP and Head Start).
- ▶ A minimum of 320 preschool classroom hours per year, over at least 30 weeks and at least 2.5 hours per class session.
- ▶ A maximum class size of 20 students with the minimum adult-to-child ratio of 1:9.
- ▶ ECEAP contractors will integrate individual ECEAP “slots” in a variety of settings to achieve a mixed-delivery system.
- ▶ Lead teachers must have an associate degree or higher with 30 quarter credits in early childhood education. Lead teachers and family support specialists must attend at least 15 hours of professional development workshops or classes per year, which will increase to 20 hours per year in 2014.
- ▶ Children receive comprehensive services including developmental, vision and hearing screening; immunization verification; health and mental health services coordination; and nutrition support services.
- ▶ Families must receive a minimum of three formal parent-teacher conferences and three hours of family support contact per year. This will change to three parent-teacher conferences and three family support visits per year in 2014.
- ▶ Families are engaged in children’s classrooms, program governance, program quality monitoring, parenting education and family and community events. Families are encouraged to be leaders and advocate for their child’s needs.

4 Friedman-Krass, A., Barnett, W. S, Ph.D. *Early Childhood Education: Pathways to Better Health*. National Institute for Early Education Research. April 2013. <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/health%20brief.pdf>

ECEAP's Fit in the Integrated System of Early Learning Opportunities

Some learning and development services (such as public schools) are intended for all children, while others (such as subsidized child care) are available to some children because they are at-risk. Still other services (like Early Support for Infants and Toddlers—ESIT—and ECEAP) are available to the few children with multiple risk factors. Early Achievers, preschool-through-third grade (P-3) alignment and other quality assurance structures support data-driven continuous quality improvement of these early learning services. The goal for Washington State's integrated system of early learning opportunities is to meet children's diverse needs as they develop and learn. A continuum of easily accessible early learning opportunities respond to the individual needs of children and families based on age, developmental and learning needs and desired learning settings. This allows for family choice and range of options in the types of early learning services they access including part-day, full-day and integrated options ECEAP serves the few, most vulnerable, children.

Important ECEAP Expansion Assumptions

The expansion strategy is based on the following key assumptions:

1. ECEAP prioritizes serving the most vulnerable children and families.
2. ECEAP serves 3- and 4-year-old children because research shows that vulnerable children benefit from receiving two years of high-quality preschool.
3. DEL partners with ECEAP contractors and communities to reflect and respond to the unique character and needs of the populations they serve.
4. DEL estimates 80 percent of families with 4-year-old children and 57 percent of families with 3-year-old children eligible for ECEAP and Head Start will choose to participate. These estimates are based on assumptions used by other states when expanding their state-funded preschool.
5. All ECEAP contractors will participate in Early Achievers by 2014-2015, per House Bill 1723.
6. All strategies are contingent upon funding appropriated by the Legislature.

Guiding Principles for Expansion

The following principles help ensure an effective and high-quality expansion process.

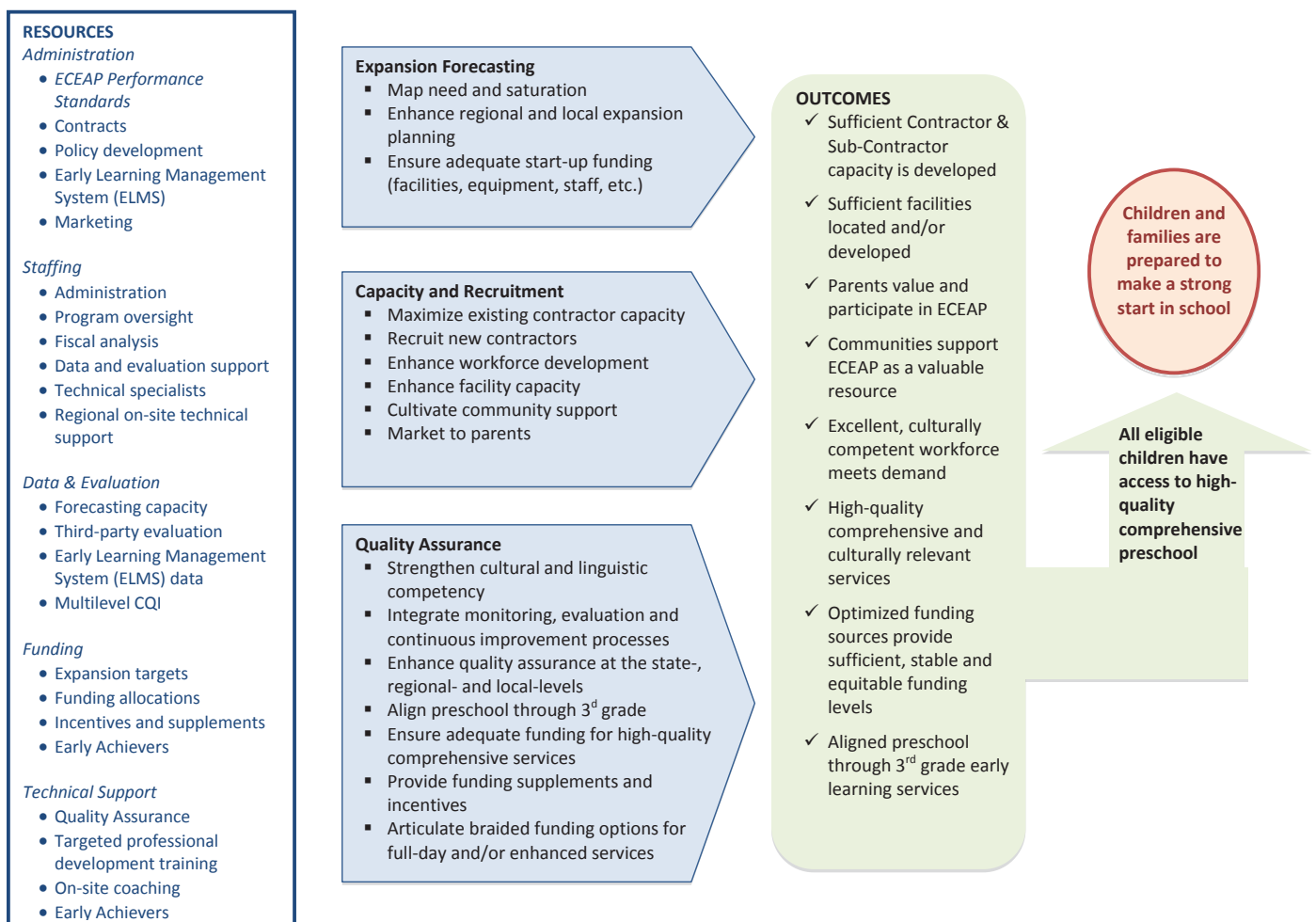
1. **Serve Lowest Saturation Areas First.** Place ECEAP slots first in communities with state-funded full-day kindergarten that are currently underserved by ECEAP and Head Start. By statute 43.215.142, expansion follows school catchment areas where full-day kindergarten is being expanded and allows us to reach our most vulnerable children and families.
2. **Close the Opportunity Gap.** Focus on closing the opportunity gap that results in the academic achievement gap by:
 - Strengthening cultural competency and addressing the changing demographics of children served as ECEAP expands.
 - Ensuring contractors meet minimum quality standards while expanding and enhancing services for children and families.
 - Reaching all communities with eligible children, including rural and remote areas and those furthest from opportunity through a mixed-delivery system of school and community-based contractors and sites.
3. **Provide Comprehensive Preschool Services.** Continue the comprehensive service approach, which is essential to supporting improved child outcomes. Comprehensive services include:
 - Educational learning environment and activities.
 - Nutrition, health and mental health coordination service.
 - Family support and engagement.
4. **Broaden the existing mixed-delivery settings and organizations that provide ECEAP.**

5. **Strengthen Integration of Early Learning Services.** Strengthen integration and alignment of the birth to third-grade early learning system as envisioned in our state’s 10-year Early Learning Plan. For example, ECEAP will use the same teacher-child interaction and environment assessment instruments (CLASS and ERS) as those used in Early Achievers. ECEAP currently uses Teaching Strategies GOLD®, the same whole child assessment used in the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS).
6. **Strengthen Capacity to Assure High Quality.** Address quality assurance and the use of data for continuous quality improvement. Identify funding for the infrastructure necessary to maintain high quality and culturally competent services.
7. **Build on Current Capacity and Expertise.** Use current contractor expertise to support rapid and high-quality expansion, including mentoring new ECEAP contractors. Promote cooperation, collaboration and affiliation at contractor, regional and state levels. Intentionally engage communities and potential participating families as part of expansion.
8. **Community Contribution.** Value and encourage local in-kind and cash support, including facilities.

Pillars of Success

The Theory of Action drives expansion outcomes. These three interconnected strategies support achievement of positive results for children and families. They work together (for example, local program quality is dependent on higher education work force development capacity.)

Figure 2: ECEAP Expansion Theory of Action

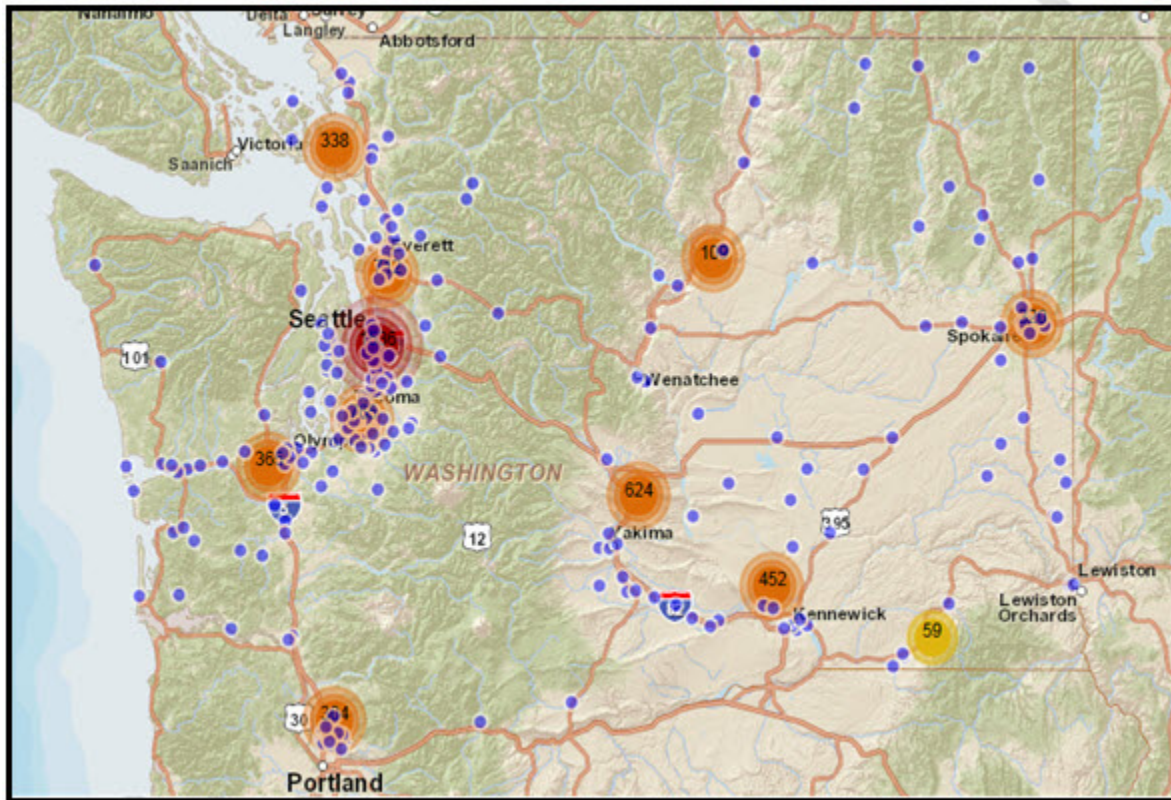


Expansion Projections

The move of ECEAP to an entitlement provides exciting and challenging opportunities. The scale and scope of the expansion will require considerable preparation to help ensure adequate pipelines of interested and qualified contractors, subcontractors, professionals and facilities to realize the envisioned expansion.

During the 2013-14 school year, DEL provides 8,741 ECEAP slots through 39 contractors at 269 sites.

Figure 3: Map of Current ECEAP and Licensed Child Care Sites



The Recruitment Plan describes how DEL will build on existing infrastructure, work force and capacities. Important assumptions that underpin projections of how quickly and where slot expansion can occur are:

Participation rates. DEL estimates that 80 percent of eligible 4-year-old children and 57 percent of 3-year-old children will participate.

Caseload forecast. DEL will continue to annually forecast caseloads using the methodology approved by OFM, which counts current ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start and American Indian/Alaskan Native Head Start slots. These current processes indicate:

- ▶ 10,941 additional slots will be needed to serve eligible 3- and 4-year-olds by 2018-19. This number excludes the 350 expansion slots the Legislature appropriated for FY14.
- ▶ When surveyed, current contractors estimated they can fill 6,641 of the needed slots over the next five years in the following locations:
 - 62 percent in school-based classrooms.
 - 20 percent in community nonprofit classrooms.
 - 18 percent in other settings, including licensed child care.
 - DEL will recruit contractors to serve the estimated 4,300 remaining slots to serve all eligible children by school year 2018-19.

Annual Expansion Needs From 2013-14 through 2018-19

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
SLOTS						
Total new slots for children per year <i>FY16-19 amounts are proposed to implement plan</i>	350	1,350	2,398	2,398	2,398	2,398
Total Slots	8,741	10,091	12,489	14,887	17,284	19,682
FUNDING						
Average funds per slot <i>Includes DEL and pass-through amounts</i>	\$6,890	\$7,579	\$7,579	\$7,579	\$7,579	\$7,579
New funds per year <i>Includes rate increase and new slots</i>	\$3,073,000	\$16,245,000	\$18,174,000	\$18,174,000	\$18,174,000	\$18,174,000
Total funds per year <i>Includes FY13 base</i>	\$60,229,000	\$76,474,000	\$94,652,000	\$112,826,000	\$131,000,000	\$149,166,000
Additional appropriation needed <i>Above FY15 funding level</i>			\$18,178,000	\$36,352,000	\$54,526,000	\$72,692,000
FACILITIES						
Estimated new classrooms per year <i>Facility costs are not included in funding, above</i>		56	100	100	100	100
TEACHING STAFF						
Estimated new teachers per year <i>Does not include other staff, such as family support and health specialists, data entry staff.</i>		112	200	200	200	200

To serve 19,682 children and families, an estimated 456 new lead and assistant teachers are needed. This is based on the assumption of 18 children per classroom and half of new classrooms using a double session model. This may require dollars for scholarships and other resources to ensure an adequate work force to support high-quality comprehensive preschool. Slots integrated into other settings and those with a smaller class size of 18 to 20 children have different cost assumptions tied to expansion that are being considered by the 5595 task force. Those assumptions are not addressed in this report.

Start-Up Funding. To start up high-quality comprehensive services, contractors may need funds to:

- ▶ Renovate, lease, purchase or build facilities. (See Figure 8: Facility Development and Financing Pathways)
- ▶ Build or purchase initial infrastructure, such as data systems, or audiology, vision or other screening tools.
- ▶ Purchase or renovate outdoor play equipment.
- ▶ Purchase classroom equipment, furniture and materials.
- ▶ Pay for buses for transporting children based on demonstrated need and that purchase is the least expensive (or only) transportation option.
- ▶ Pay for educational scholarships or other support to prepare qualified staff.

DEL proposes to provide modest start-up funding for new contractors. At this time, DEL will not request capital funding to purchase facilities. DEL will give priority to communities with need that also have appropriate facilities (public or private). In the future, capital funding may need to be addressed.

Expansion Area Prioritization. DEL uses an annual saturation study as a key factor to manage the allocation of slots. This study describes (at the county, school district and elementary catchment area level) current placement of ECEAP and Head Start slots, in relation to where children in poverty live.

By [statute 43.215.142](#), expansion follows school catchment areas where state-funded full-day kindergarten is being expanded. Since expansion of state-funded full-day kindergarten may result in the loss of ECEAP classrooms, staff and transportation to full-day kindergarten, the ability to expand in these areas without local investment in new facilities may be limited. When ECEAP expansion alongside state-funded full-day kindergarten expansion is not possible, ECEAP expansion will prioritize:

- ▶ Communities with high need according to the saturation study, with special consideration to communities that have recently lost Head Start services due to sequestration or re-competition.
- ▶ Communities with a high number of Early Achievers participants at levels 3 to 5.
- ▶ Communities where there is an existing contractor who is meeting all provisions of the ECEAP contract and performance standards and who has the capacity to add slots. In communities where there is need, but no such successful contractor, DEL will focus recruitment on identifying a new contractor or encouraging a regional contractor to expand services into the area.
- ▶ Communities with high need, including families engaged in the child welfare system.
- ▶ Communities that braid funding to provide full-day integrated high-quality services.
- ▶ Communities that qualify for contracted child care slots.

Recruitment Plan

DEL currently provides 8,741 ECEAP slots through 39 contractors at 269 sites around the state. This recruitment plan is designed to help DEL build on existing infrastructure, work force and capacities. DEL has defined "pathways" through which new contractors, subcontractors and staff members will come on board by school year 2018-19, when the program becomes a statutory entitlement.

To help ensure the required level of capacity and infrastructure needed to deliver high-quality comprehensive preschool services shown by research to deliver results for children and families, DEL has specified the needed characteristics of ECEAP contractors.

Figure 4: ECEAP Contractor Characteristics

To demonstrate minimum capacity and quality levels, new and expanding ECEAP contractors must demonstrate the following characteristics:	
>	Experience conducting needs assessment and expansion planning.
>	Expertise in preschool education, health coordination services and family support services.
>	The ability, solely or in affiliation with other contractors, to provide comprehensive ECEAP services.
>	Existing community and school partnerships that ensure ECEAP families educational, health and family support needs are met. Positive reviews from parents served by the organization.
>	Ability, solely or in affiliation with other contractors, to ensure meaningful parent and family participation on an ECEAP policy council, Health Advisory Committee and in other parent and family engagement processes.
>	A minimum rating of level 3 in Early Achievers for licensed child care centers and family homes. This minimum may increase as research emerges about quality indicators linked to helping children make the gains needed to close the opportunity gap.
>	Adequate staff compensation and benefits to attract and retain qualified staff.
>	Adequate numbers of qualified staff identified to serve the number of slots in the program.
>	Appropriate facilities.
>	Ability to meet governance and other contractual requirements.
>	Management experience, fiscal management capacity, and have marketing methods in place.
>	Experience providing developmentally-appropriate direct early childhood education services.
>	Adequate processes and systems for gathering data, and monitoring and continuously improving program quality.
>	Demonstrated understanding and commitment to cultural competence.

DEL will strengthen and broaden the historic use of a mixed-delivery system (contractors and subcontractors of different types and sizes) to reach all children around the state, including those in rural and remote communities and those of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Faith-based organizations are eligible to provide ECEAP services if they meet the contractor characteristics and provide services in a space and manner that is free of religious instruction, activities and symbolism (per [Attorney General Opinion 2009, No. 8](#)). After successfully completing the request for proposal process, ECEAP contractors typically deliver services according to the DEL ECEAP contract.

This recruitment plan describes the pathways for new contractors and subcontractors, facilities and staff members to come on board over the next five years as well as pathways for developing and financing facilities.

New ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways. A key expansion strategy includes reaching out to new contractors and subcontractors of different types. DEL will partner with communities to advertise and provide orientations regarding ECEAP roles and responsibilities, ECEAP contract requirements and performance standards, Early Learning Management System (ELMS) data entry and monitoring practices. DEL will engage new contractors that meet the ECEAP Contractor Characteristics and can provide a minimum of 240 slots (Head Start slots count toward this total). (See Figure 5: Contractor and Subcontractor Recruitment Strategy)

Adequate infrastructure to successfully implement high-quality comprehensive services requires careful decisions about minimum contract size. Replication of administrative and quality assurance structures in small individual programs costs considerably more than in programs with multiple sites. Larger programs can spread these costs across a number of settings. Administration of large numbers of small contracts, including monitoring and quality assurance activities, is also more expensive for DEL. For these reasons, DEL has established a minimum of 240 slots (ECEAP and Head Start combined) for a new contractor. This contract size ensures ECEAP contractors have sufficient infrastructure to provide and manage the high-quality comprehensive services shown to help vulnerable children succeed. To provide a sense of scale, creating a program of this size would require 12 classes at the ECEAP maximum of 20 children per class. 2013-14 ECEAP contractors are exempt from the minimum requirement of 240 slots. When applying for expansion, 2013-14 contractors that meet ECEAP requirements may be exempt from the minimum. DEL may negotiate nation-to-nation agreements with sovereign nations that meet the needs of individual Indian Nations and the state.

DEL will encourage potential new contractors that cannot provide the minimum level of slots to participate as subcontractors through affiliation with a larger organization. DEL will support regional partners to explore shared service alliances and other ways of allowing smaller organizations to affiliate and serve as subcontractors. This facilitates the ability of smaller sites to participate and provides infrastructure and capacity so they can meet the comprehensive service and quality requirements of ECEAP. There is no minimum slot amount at a particular site, which allows access to services in smaller communities and varied types of organizations.

Smaller subcontractors—small nonprofits, licensed centers and family child care—may choose to join together to meet the minimum contractor size and share costs of required infrastructure to meet ECEAP Performance Standards as noted in the attached ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways. Consideration will be needed to identify the best ways to support this “affiliation” process. DEL is committed to working with the 5595 task force to explore ways to broaden the current mixed-delivery model. Topics to explore include costs associated with infrastructure and capacity to ensure success in meeting ECEAP requirements, including comprehensive services and child and family outcomes. (See Figure 6: ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways).

Developing and Recruiting the Workforce. As ECEAP expands, preparing the workforce will require clear pathways for teachers, family support staff and health staff to obtain the qualifications needed to provide high-quality and culturally relevant services to children.

DEL will collaborate with higher education to strengthen course work and improve pathways for experienced professionals to obtain degrees. The Washington Career Lattice defines strategies to attract and retain professionals who already meet qualification and experience requirements, but work in other systems. DEL will work with state and regional partners to further connect and expand existing professional development and learning opportunities. (See Figure 7: Workforce Development and Recruitment Pathways.)

Developing and Financing Facilities. ECEAP Performance Standards require 35 square feet per child for indoor space and 75 square feet for outdoors space. Standards also have specific health and safety requirements

based on best practices in comprehensive preschool programming. As ECEAP expands, local and regional partners will need a variety of ways to develop and finance facilities that meet these requirements. In some communities, expansion of ECEAP in tandem with state-funded full-day kindergarten creates competition for infrastructure including classroom space and transportation. In others, available facilities may require little or no renovation. In the future, capital funding is needed for new ECEAP facilities and for replacement of facilities lost to expansion of state-funded full-day kindergarten and other programs. (See Figure 8: Facility Development and Financing Pathways.)

Enrolling Eligible Families. Ensuring that families have access to ECEAP requires reaching out to parents so they know about the program and can find a program that meets their needs. DEL will work with state, regional and local partners to increase coordination among current parent resource and referral entities. This is one step toward a vision of a more centralized referral process that is easy for families to navigate to access all of children’s needs from child care through ECEAP.

Figure 5: ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Recruitment Strategy

<p>Planning for recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DEL refines Recruitment Plan with local and regional partners (school districts, Child Care Aware of Washington and regions) > DEL targets areas where saturation and current contractor expansion capacity are low > DEL develops ECEAP Readiness Self-Assessment and provides orientations > Local, regional and state partners identify potential local contractors and/or regional partners that, with incentives, might be able to expand to harder-to-serve areas
<p>Identifying Potential Contractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DEL works with partners to identify additional potential contractors and “affiliated service” options > DEL works with Child Care Aware of Washington to invite level 3+ Early Achievers to consider ECEAP > DEL works with OSPI and professional associations to invite private & public schools and others to consider ECEAP
<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DEL posts ECEAP contractor recruitment and informational materials on DEL website > Regional and local level early learning partners (ELRCs, CCA, etc) post information and links to DEL website
<p>Orientation and Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Prospective contractors attend DEL Orientation to ECEAP Webinar > Prospective contractors seek guidance from current ECEAP contractors > Prospective contractors complete ECEAP Readiness Self-Assessment > Prospective contractors prepare to apply and/or affiliate
<p>Application Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DEL releases ECEAP RFP > Prospective contractors complete applications > Prospective subcontractors help contractors to apply
<p>Contract Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > DEL awards new / expanded contracts > Contractors award new subcontracts
<p>Start-Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Contractors and subcontractors develop/renovate facilities > Contractors and subcontractors gather classroom and other materials > Staff receive pre-service training

Figure 6: ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways

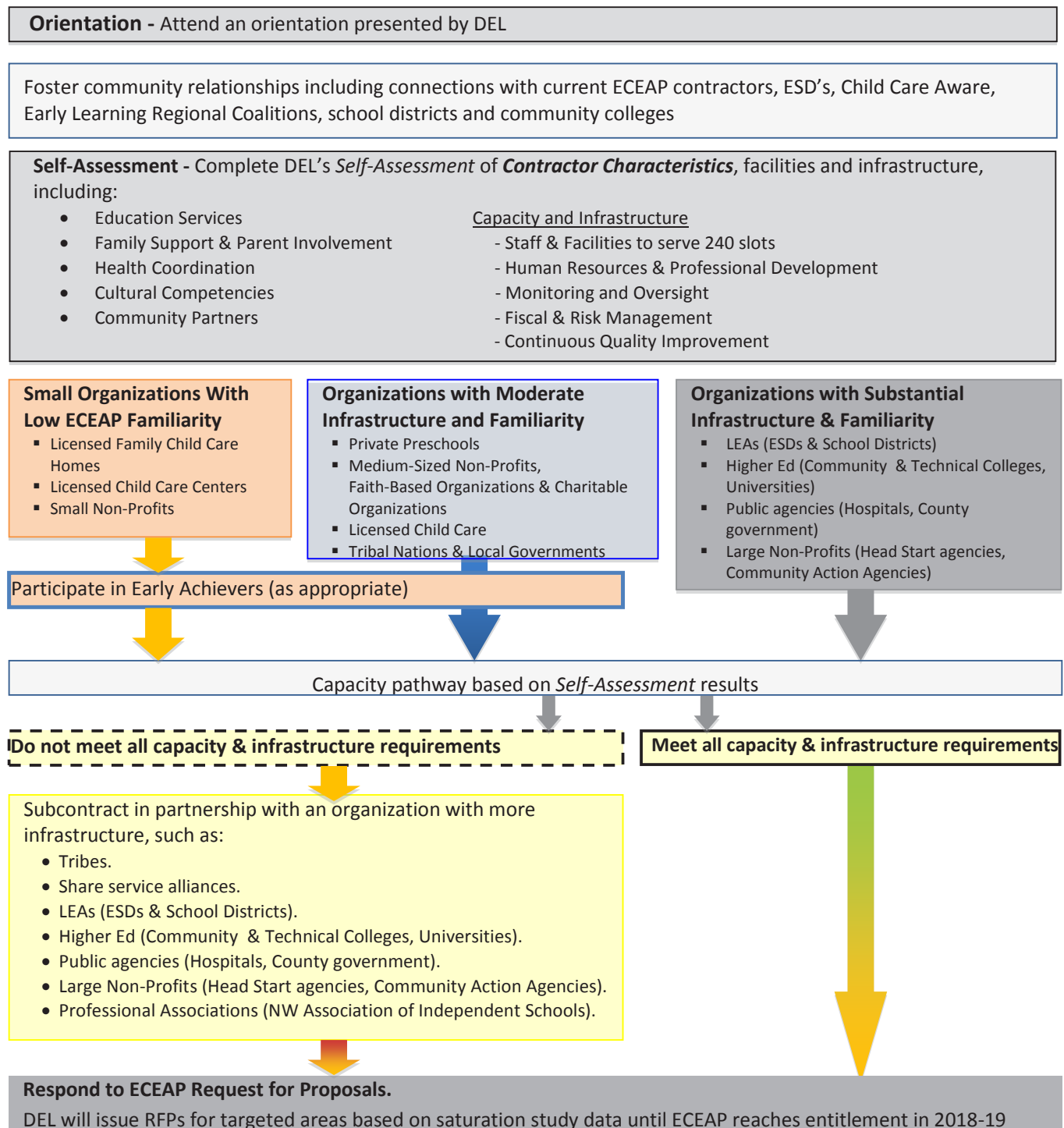


Figure 7: Workforce Development and Recruitment Pathways

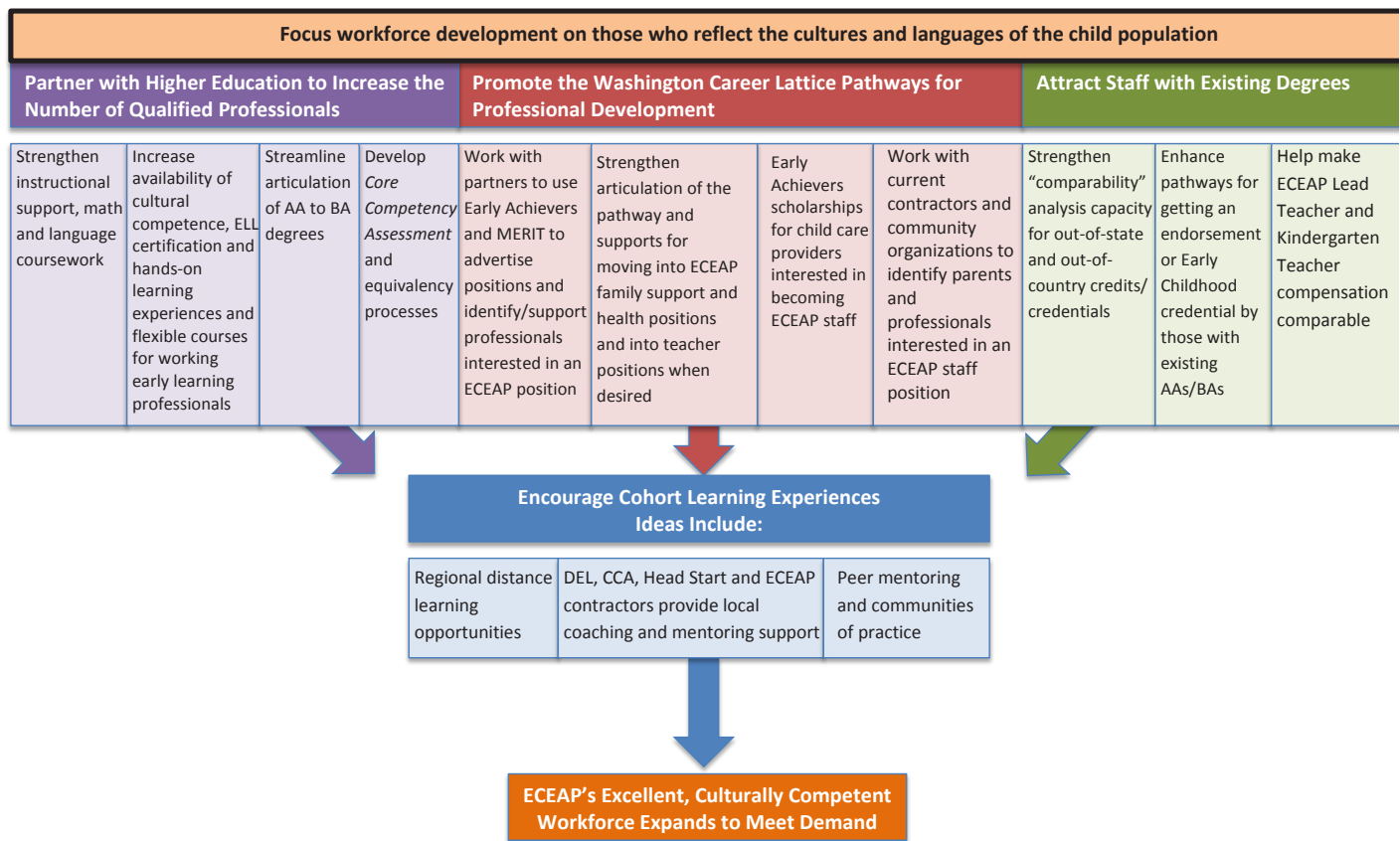
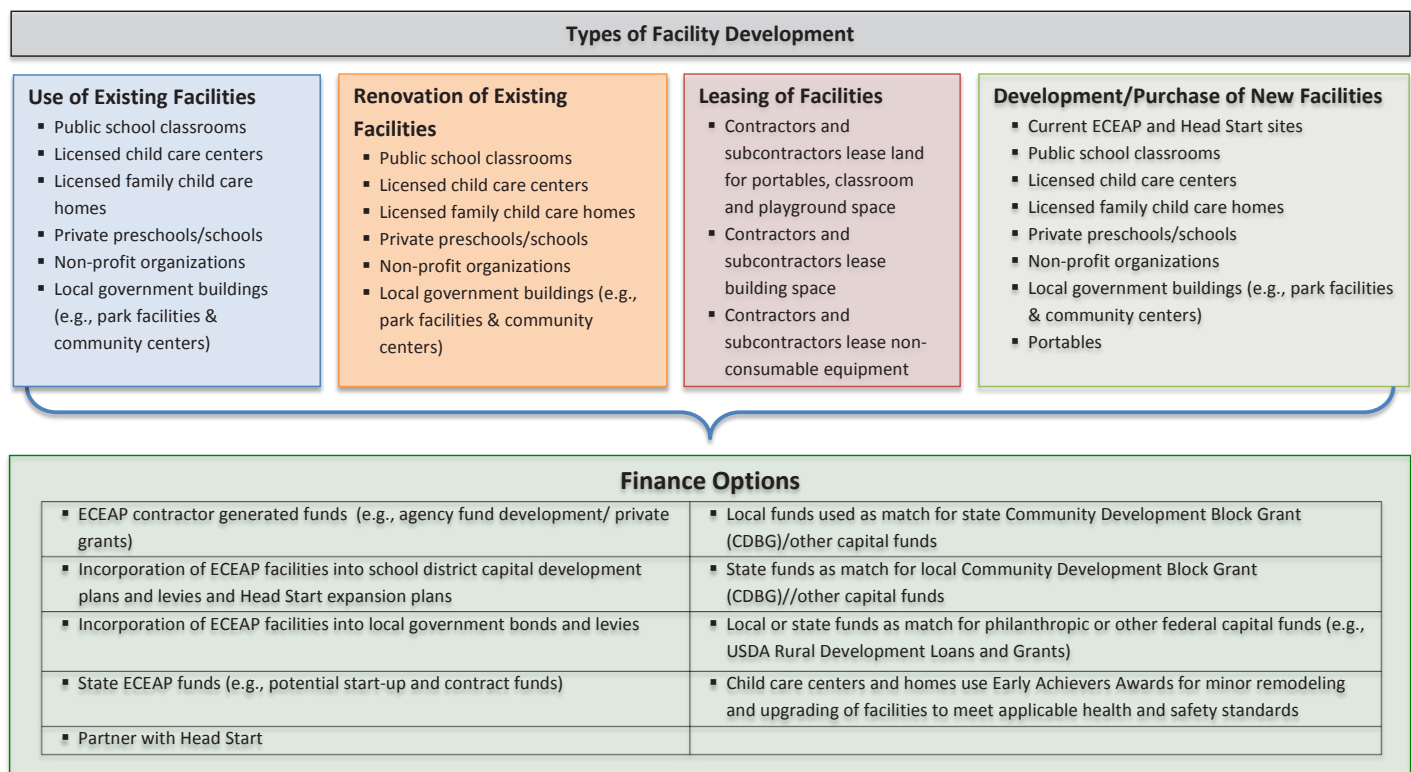


Figure 8: Facility Development and Financing Pathways



As ECEAP expands, state, local and regional partners will need a range of facility development pathways and financing options. ECEAP Performance Standards require 35 square feet per child for indoor space and 75 square feet for outdoors space and have health and safety requirements based on best practices in comprehensive preschool programming. ECEAP contractors and subcontractors must also secure non-consumable equipment such as classroom furnishings and playground equipment. In some locations the expansion of Full-Day Kindergarten or other programs may reduce the space available for existing classrooms. Figure 8 illustrates potential pathways to develop and finance ECEAP facilities.

Oversight, Quality Assurance and Evaluation

As stated in the expansion plan overview, dosage, comprehensiveness of services and quality of preschool impact children's learning and development. Research shows that a high-quality pre-K experience can have a tremendous impact on a child's learning and development and can contribute to reductions in grade-level retention and the need for special education⁵. For example, grade-level retention was cut in half by second grade for participating 3- and 4-year-olds in New Jersey.

Three key factors contribute to the extent to which preschool benefits low-income children: program quality, comprehensiveness of services and dosage (the amount of time children and families participate).

High-quality programs provide a combination of the following characteristics:

1. Highly skilled teachers.
2. Small class sizes and high adult-to-child ratios.
3. Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting.
4. A language-rich environment.
5. Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children.
6. High and consistent levels of child participation⁶.

The comprehensiveness of ECEAP services can improve children's physical and mental health as well as their learning and development. This is important as children living in poverty are more likely to experience highly stressful home environments and be exposed to violence, both of which are associated with negative health and developmental outcomes. Research also supports the importance of ECEAP's focus on family engagement. Family engagement in a child's education is a key predictor of academic achievement. Studies show that involvement with high-quality child care or preschool from birth to 54 months can result in increased mother-teacher contact in kindergarten.

The duration and intensity of preschool also contribute to children's learning and development. Two years of preschool are more effective than one year, in achieving educational outcomes. New Jersey's rigorously evaluated preschool program closed more than 50 percent of children's achievement gap after one year, versus 18 percent for the "no Pre-K group." Two years of participation roughly doubled the gain at second grade on most measures. In addition, according to the results of a randomized trial, children who attend an extended-day, extended-year preschool program experience greater improvements in test scores compared to peers who attended half-day programs.

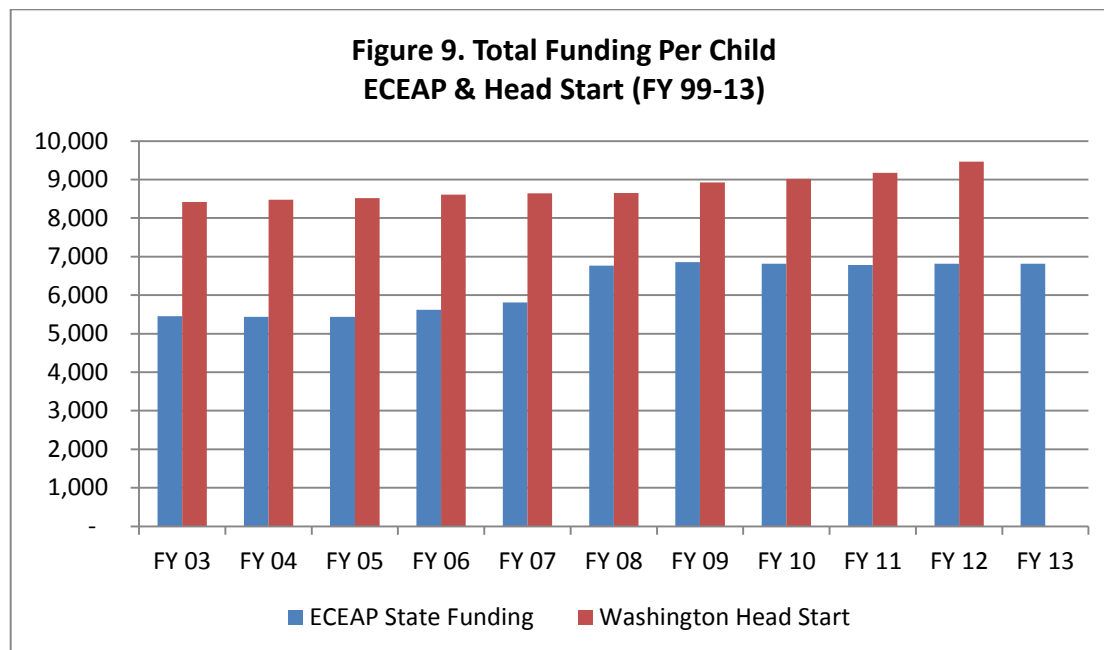
To be sure that Washington provides these three important ingredients of quality, comprehensiveness and dosage, it is necessary to ensure adequate funds are available to do so in all parts of the state. As Figure 9

5 Barnett, S.W, Yung, K, Youn, M & Frede, E.C, *Executive Summary. Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up. National Institute for Early Education Research Rutgers University. March 20, 2013.* <http://www.nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

6 Crosnoe, R., Augustine J.M., Huston A.C., *Children's Early Child Care and Their Mothers' Later Involvement with Schools" Child Development March 2012. Published online 2012 February 7. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01726.x*

demonstrates, though the child-teacher ratio and most fixed costs are the same, ECEAP does not receive the same level of funding as Head Start. This points out the importance of more deeply understanding appropriate funding levels over time and identifying ways to fully-fund high-program quality.

Figure 9: Total Funding Per Child, ECEAP and Head Start, FY99-13



Because of the importance of these three elements and the current lower level of funding, DEL's Oversight, Evaluation and Quality Assurance approach is designed to strengthen DEL's ability to ensure and continuously increase quality as it expands ECEAP. This strategy is also underpinned with a focus on cultural and linguistic competence for staff at both the DEL and contractor level.

DEL is approaching this challenge by drawing on the lessons from other states that have experienced expansion of their preschool programs (See Appendix B – Lessons Learned.) The four key elements of this approach are:

1. Enhance program quality and participate in Early Achievers.
2. Ensure integrated contractor, regional and state-level quality assurance capacity (planning expansion, providing oversight and technical assistance and continuously improving services.)
3. Implement an evaluation of the program and integrate it with existing continuous improvement activities at the contractor level and monitoring by DEL.
4. Ensure adequate funding for high-quality comprehensive services.

Enhancements to Program Quality and Integration of Quality Assurance Processes. Over the course of the expansion, DEL and ECEAP contractors will implement several improvements to program quality.

- ▶ **Cultural and Linguistic Competency.** Cultural and linguistic competence is seen as a hallmark of quality for ECEAP. DEL will support these values by:
 - Locating DEL staff members in early learning regions to create deeper alignment, understanding and reflection of the communities, cultures and languages represented among children and families.
 - Requiring annual training that increases knowledge and emphasizes the importance of aligning with family cultures.
- ▶ **Increased Alignment with Early Achievers Assessments.** ECEAP will use the Classroom Assessment Scoring

System (CLASS) and Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) for comprehensive program reviews, monitoring and continuous quality improvement. These are the same tools used in all Early Achievers participating facilities.

- ▶ Enhanced Program Review Cycle. Within available funds, DEL will phase in a three-year program review cycle with a follow-up site visit within six months by school year 2018-2019. Each contractor will also receive an annual site visit to provide technical support for program quality, follow-up on action plans, and targeted technical assistance on using data to improve instruction, enrollment and eligibility, and family support. DEL will align program reviews with those of Head Start and Early Achievers, sharing information, aligning calendars and reducing duplication.
- ▶ Increased Professional Development Hours. Each assistant and lead teacher must maintain 20 hours or more of high-quality professional learning over the course of the year. This is a change from the current requirement of 15 hours per year.
- ▶ Oversight and Quality Assurance Capacity Enhancements. DEL will develop a structure to distribute functions to the regional level (as is done by virtually all of the six states studied in the Lessons Learned best practices research) and to augment current state- and local-level functions.

By school year 2018-2019, DEL will locate some staff in early learning regions⁷. This will create deeper understanding of community specific needs and strengthen relationships in each of the regions. DEL will build regional monitoring and technical assistance capacity and focus state-level staff on core infrastructure (See Figure 10: Distribution of Oversight and Quality Assurance Functions.) Further, DEL will encourage ECEAP contractors to work with school districts to create P-3 teams to coordinate seamless transitions for children and families. The teams will work together on aligning curriculum and professional development; planning transition activities for children and families; participating in the early learning collaboration portion of WaKIDS; marketing ECEAP and kindergarten orientation opportunities; and identifying facilities, infrastructure, and shared services.

As part of ECEAP expansion, DEL will need to add staff for ECEAP monitoring, quality assurance, program support, data analysis and information technology. DEL will maintain a staff level of one ECEAP FTE per 620 ECEAP slots by school year 2018-19. DEL may add additional FTEs a year prior to specific slot expansion targets to support high-quality implementation of ECEAP. DEL will adjust staffing assumptions based upon rate of expansion, changes to the program model and regionalization of quality assurance efforts. DEL will use existing staff expertise to create a professional development cadre that provides coaching, technical assistance and professional development to all DEL programs.

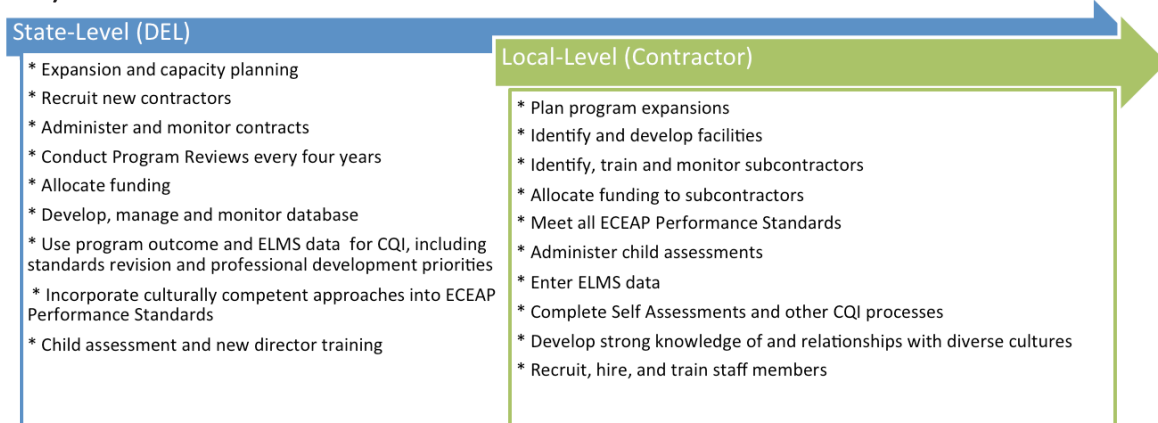
To accomplish this, DEL projects focusing staff on:

- ▶ Program Administration. These staff members focus on the internal and external functions of ECEAP operation.
- ▶ Data Analysis. Analyze data gained through sources such as our Early Learning Management System (ELMS) and Teaching Strategies GOLD[®]. DEL will use this data in concert with ECEAP evaluation and program review data to inform continuous quality improvement efforts and any necessary programmatic changes.
- ▶ Professional Development, Instructional Support and P-3 Alignment. These positions will develop the statewide ECEAP training and technical assistance system. They will work closely with the Head Start State Collaboration Office, the DEL Professional Development Administrator and the Early Achievers team, connecting ECEAP efforts with those of the larger system. P-3 alignment efforts will focus on relationships with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the educational service districts, the Early Learning Regional Coalitions and Child Care Aware of Washington to help ensure WaKIDS and other data sources are used to inform the design of the ECEAP Professional Development model.

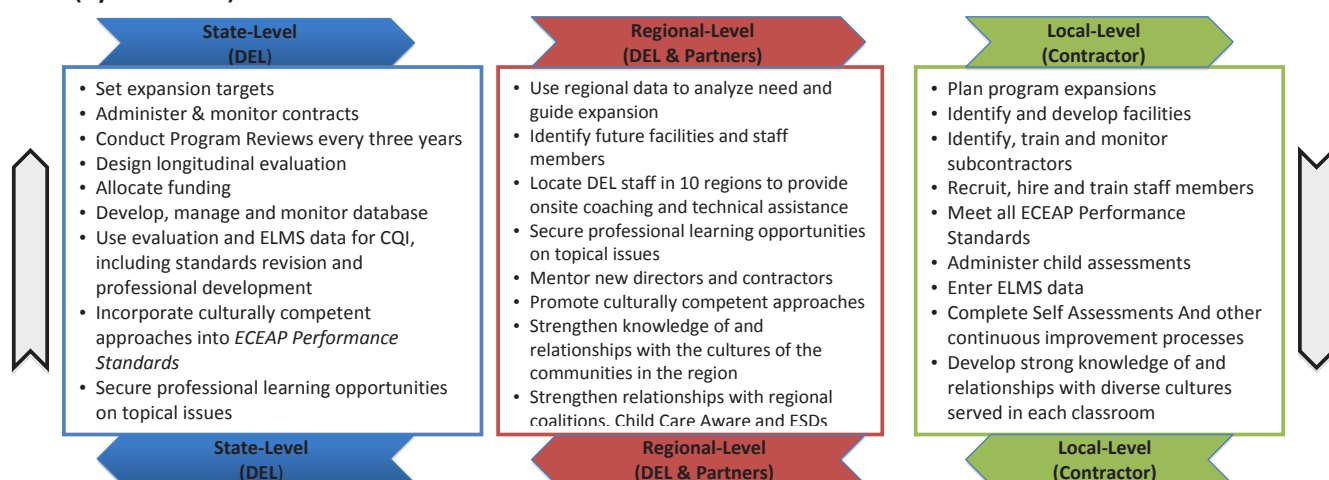
⁷ Early learning regions share the same boundaries as Educational Services Districts with King and Pierce Counties divided into separate regions because of their size.

Figure 10: Distribution of Oversight & Quality Assurance Functions

Current (2013-2014)



Future (by 2018-2019)



- To promote the ability of the workforce to reflect the children served, DEL will intentionally work with communities of color to ensure that trainings are accessible, reflective and create an opportunity for communities of color to have a voice and be part of the process.
- Contract Management, Monitoring and Quality Assurance. This team is responsible for the overall contract management, monitoring, quality assurance and continuous quality improvement process in providing ECEAP services. They will oversee the monitoring and comprehensive program reviews including any necessary follow-up and improvement plans. Within this team are three distinct operations:
 - Contract management specialists will provide contract management from the DEL State Office and will lead ECEAP program reviews at the regional and local levels. They will use desktop monitoring, monthly calls and technical assistance on action plans to maintain relationships with contractors.
 - Quality assurance specialists located in the early learning regions will provide regional and site-based training, on-site coaching and technical assistance, new classroom visits and may participate in program reviews. These staff will also connect with local and regional P-3 alignment activities. The quality assurance manager is located at the State Office.
 - A fiscal analyst will support ECEAP fiscal reviews, cost modeling, review and production of fiscal notes and budget allotment development.

Continuous Quality Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation Integration. An evaluation of the statewide program examining seven key dimensions of preschool quality will occur every two years. The evaluation will use a stratified random sample distributed across early learning regions. A Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) will be used to estimate causation of child and program outcomes by specific elements. This will augment existing continuous quality improvement and outcomes measures. Data gathered through the evaluation and continuous quality improvement processes will be used to target quality improvement efforts and to refine ECEAP requirements, components and standards.

The evaluation is one piece of the overall ECEAP monitoring and quality assurance efforts. DEL and contractors gather a variety of data to assure and improve quality. DEL will use data gathered through program monitoring and comprehensive reviews, Early Achievers participation and ratings, technical assistance requests, and longitudinal evaluation to inform program design at the state, regional and local level. This will ensure ECEAP contractors have the necessary tools to reach the desired child and family outcomes.

The focus of program monitoring is to ensure compliance with contractual obligations, ECEAP Performance Standards and Early Achievers expectations. The evaluation process will gather data about the degree to which the ECEAP model is achieving its aims. It will also gather data that can inform the quality improvement processes at the contractor, regional and state levels. ECEAP contractors gather a variety of types of data throughout the program year as they conduct Community Need Assessment, administer self-assessments and use Teaching Strategies GOLD® to refine their classroom practices. All of these data are used at each level to reflect on results and inform changes (See Figure 11: Continuous Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation.)

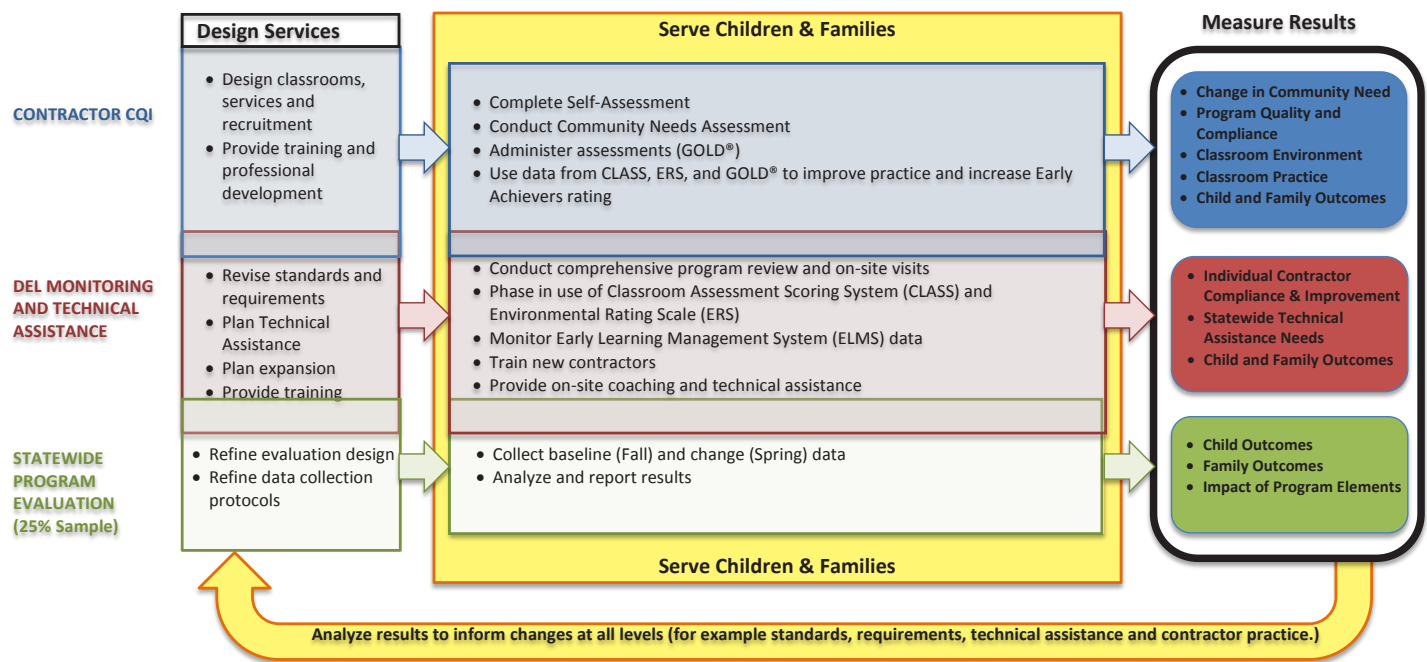
Adequate Funding. As noted above, the availability of funding adequate to start up and maintain high-quality comprehensive preschool services is key to the success of the expansion. Three important considerations underpin the ability of DEL and its partners to do so:

Program Funding. Three key factors contribute to the extent to which preschool benefits low-income children: 1) program quality, 2) the comprehensiveness of services and 3) dosage (the amount of time children and families participate). To achieve results for children and families, the state needs to ensure the appropriate level and types of funds are available to support the delivery of such intensive and comprehensive preschool services in all parts of the state.

Multiple Funding Streams. Currently, ECEAP contractors may use funding from Head Start, Title I, special education, and child care subsidies as well as ECEAP dollars to create a viable classroom and serve the most children possible in the community. This also allows children in special education to receive services in a natural setting, reduces transitions and increases continuity of experiences. Contractors and subcontractors in licensed child care settings may use both ECEAP dollars and child care subsidy dollars to create a full-day learning experience for children.

Funding Formula. DEL will research the interplay of different program design elements—and the different cost of doing business around the state—in the year ahead. In order to understand cost variations of comprehensive services around Washington, DEL will conduct an analysis of these variables by October 2014. DEL will use the results from the study to develop a funding formula designed to promote equitable access to necessary resources as well as consider how incentives might influence expansion.

Figure 11: ECEAP Continuous Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation



Together the independent evaluation, State monitoring and technical assistance and contractor continuous quality improvement processes provides data and insight so that:

- ECEAP providers implement the high-quality preschool services described in the *ECEAP Performance Standards*, which ensures that children and families receive the comprehensive services shown to generate results.
- Children experience cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and learning as described in the *Early Learning Guidelines* and as measured by *Teaching Strategies GOLD®*

ECEAP Fall 2014 Evaluation Design

ECEAP is a comprehensive preschool program for low-income and children at higher risk for academic failure. Program objectives are:

- Achieve kindergarten readiness, including academic, social and health goals.
- Strengthen families' resilience.
- Foster family engagement in their child's learning experiences.

Ensuring that ECEAP achieves the desired results for children and families during the 2013-2019 expansion requires a robust continuous quality improvement system, including an independent evaluation of key dimensions of ECEAP quality and outcomes.

Robust Continuous Quality Improvement System

Data-driven continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes will ensure ECEAP contractors have the necessary tools to reach the desired child and family outcomes. Currently DEL's CQI efforts include detailed program performance standards, periodic comprehensive program reviews, annual self-assessment by contractors, and monthly calls and technical assistance with each ECEAP contractor.

DEL produces an annual ECEAP outcomes report on the demographics of children and families receiving ECEAP services, child learning outcomes as measured by Teaching Strategies GOLD® (also used as our state kindergarten assessment as part of WaKIDS), child health outcomes, and gains in teacher qualifications. To support the expansion of ECEAP services, while maintaining and improving program quality and effectiveness, DEL proposes to:

1. Hire adequate staff to analyze data, to refine program design and requirements based on data, to increase the intensity and frequency of contractor monitoring, and to provide on-site coaching and technical assistance to contractors.
2. Add use of data from Early Achievers classroom and teacher assessments (the Environmental Rating Scales- ERS and Classroom Assessment Scoring System- CLASS).
3. Contract for an independent evaluation of ECEAP and share results with policy makers and ECEAP stakeholders.
4. Use data from the independent evaluation, in addition to other measures collected by DEL, to understand ECEAP effectiveness and improve program quality.
5. Develop individual ECEAP contractor improvement plans based on the comprehensive data collected by DEL and through the independent evaluation.

Independent Evaluation of ECEAP Quality and Outcomes

Within available funding, DEL will contract with a research institution to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of ECEAP. The evaluation will occur every two years beginning in school year 2014-15 and will target child development, learning, and family impacts. Because DEL already collects part of the needed data, this contracted evaluation could be completed at an estimated biennial budget of \$425,000.

Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to supplement existing ECEAP outcomes measures. It will examine the short- and long-term effects of participation on family resilience and children's abilities and well-being at kindergarten entry and beyond. The evaluation will analyze if program outcomes can be predicted based on variations in program design, dosage (amount of services received by children and families), or demographic characteristics of children. Researchers will compare results across ECEAP contractors and estimate the benefits of ECEAP education, health and family support components.

DEL will use the evaluation results to understand ECEAP quality, refine program requirements, and set outcomes targets.

Evaluation Design

Research tools and data collection will target these essential elements of high-quality comprehensive preschool:

- ▶ Child development and learning, including language, literacy, math, social and emotional and executive function.
- ▶ Classroom learning environments.
- ▶ Teacher-child interactions, including instructional support practices.
- ▶ Teacher qualifications and perspectives.
- ▶ Dosage of services—including optimum hours, weeks and years of participation—and child attendance.
- ▶ Family engagement and impacts.
- ▶ Program health coordination services.
- ▶ Program cultural competency.

Researchers will collect evaluation data from direct assessments of children, classroom observations, interviews and surveys, ELMS, Early Achievers, ECEAP program review reports, and descriptions of program models. This blend of techniques will produce strong evidence to understand program quality and plan future program improvements. The use of some existing data will reduce duplication of efforts and ensure a comprehensive picture of ECEAP across the state.

DEL and the independent research institution will periodically review the evaluation design and methodology and make any necessary changes.

Sampling

Researchers will randomly sample ECEAP classrooms and children across the state's 10 early learning regions. In 2014-15, the first year of the evaluation, DEL anticipates 10,091 ECEAP slots around the state. Ideally, the evaluation will involve approximately 2,500 children as well as their families and teachers. This sample size reflects 25 percent of ECEAP children and families.

Comparison Group Methodology

The research institution will use Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD - Thistlewaite & Campbell, 1960) methods to establish a control group and analyze results. RDD creates a "treatment group" of children and a "control group based on the ECEAP and kindergarten age cut-off of Aug. 31. The "treatment group" for this study will be children whose birthdays narrowly allowed them to enter ECEAP as 4-year-olds the previous year, and who are now entering kindergarten. The "control group" will be children who narrowly missed the Aug. 31 age cut-off applied to the treatment group and are entering ECEAP as 4-year-olds one year after the treatment group. The control group must not have received prior ECEAP or Head Start services and must match other demographic characteristics of the treatment group.

Researchers evaluate both groups of children using the same assessment tools, and then apply statistical analysis based on the children's actual differences in age. For example, Child A turns 4 on August 30, 2014 and receives ECEAP services for the entire 2014-15 school year. Child B turns 4 on September 2, 2014 and doesn't get into ECEAP or Head Start in 2014-15. They differ in age by only three days, virtually the same age. Researchers consider the relationship between age and the scores for children in the control group, as well as the relationship between age and the scores for children in the treatment group. When assessments of large groups of children are analyzed in this manner, researchers can assume that differences in scores estimate the effects of ECEAP. All former ECEAP children entering kindergarten and all children entering ECEAP would be eligible for inclusion in the analysis, as long as they have not also received Head Start or similar services.

Due to random distribution of any other life variables across each group, and large sample size, we expect the children in each group to be similar, except for completion of ECEAP services. Any differences in scores between children in the treatment and the control groups provide us with estimates of the impact of ECEAP. Potential selection bias effects – the possibility that the assignment to treatment and control groups resulted in unknown differences in characteristics such as child risk factors or unknown disability - are limited because all children are from ECEAP-eligible families that decided to enroll their children in ECEAP. Researchers can better understand the effects of ECEAP participation on child outcomes while controlling for other contributing variables.

This approach also allows us to retrospectively look at the entering kindergarten children and compare those with ECEAP experience against those entering kindergarten children who did not have ECEAP but were income eligible. We avoid the ethical dilemma of establishing a control group of eligible children excluded from receiving services, since all children in the study receive ECEAP but in different years. The RDD methodology also allows us to continue the study once the program has reached full expansion and all eligible children are entitled to enroll.

Child Outcome Data Collection

Researchers will collect individual child data through one-on-one assessments and through teacher and parent surveys or interviews. They will extract child demographics, medical, dental, special needs and other

individual information from the Early Learning Management System (ELMS). They will gather attendance data from ECEAP contractors. DEL and the research institution will review potential child assessment instruments for cultural competency and overall relevance to the research design. The child assessment instruments under consideration are listed in Attachment A.

Family Outcome Data Collection

Families who have a strong support system and engage in their child's learning have increased child and family well-being, which contributes to child outcomes, according to other research. In this study, researchers will review family data from ELMS, measure family well-being and stress, and use adult resilience ratings that correlate with child and family outcomes. Through a parent survey, researchers will collect additional information about family routines, involvement and engagement in ECEAP and school, participation in parenting education, and other family activities. DEL will explore inclusion of data from other state databases such as the state P-20 longitudinal data warehouse to show impact of ECEAP on family economic resilience, including degree attainment.

Classroom Quality Data Collection

As required in House Bill 1723 passed during the 2013 legislative session, by the 2014-2015 school year, all ECEAP contractors will participate in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). Early Achievers focuses on high-quality early learning experiences tied to school readiness. Data collected during the Early Achievers rating process measure early learning classroom quality and teacher-child interactions. This study will use the Early Achievers ratings and may use additional classroom quality rating tools listed in Attachment A.

Teacher Experience Data Collection

This study will also collect teachers' opinions of their roles and the impact of the job on their sense of well-being. Research links teachers who experience their roles as positive with higher child outcomes. DEL and researchers may:

- ▶ Collect teachers' demographic information through MERIT and other sources.
- ▶ Use a tool to measure teacher well-being.
- ▶ Survey teachers on perceptions of workplace experience.
- ▶ Assess teachers using the state Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, as a predictor of classroom quality teacher-child interactions.
- ▶ Longitudinal Cohort/Sub-Study

Some study children will continue in the study through third grade. Researchers will administer an abbreviated battery of child assessments during the K-3rd grade years as well as teacher demographics and school quality ratings obtained through CLASS, Academic Snapshot and Curriculum Fidelity. This longitudinal study is needed to show change over time, including retention or loss of gains made in ECEAP.

Appendix A: Future Exploration and Action Items

During the development of this ECEAP Expansion Plan, the work group raised ideas that require future exploration and action. DEL has shared relevant ideas with the other early learning work groups to ensure coordination affecting ECEAP. DEL will work with the 5595 Task Force, the Legislature, the Governor and stakeholders to consider how the recommendations of the Task Force and deliberations of the Legislature in the 2014 session affect ECEAP. DEL will revise steps outlined in this Expansion Plan as necessary.

1. **Entitlement Definition.** By 2018-2019, children and families will be entitled to high-quality comprehensive preschool services. As the program reaches full expansion, DEL will work with legislators, policymakers and stakeholders to ensure access to high-quality ECEAP. Considerations for this definition of entitlement will include:
 - Open slots available within the child's resident school district (consistent with the basic education language).
 - Availability of transportation (both parent and other means), as transportation is an allowable, but not required expense).
 - Capacity of ECEAP contractors to provide high-quality services.
 - Availability of funding.
2. **Saturation.** The DEL saturation study demonstrates the current placement of Head Start and ECEAP slots, in relation to where children in poverty live. DEL will continue to work with the Head Start Region X Office to ensure that expansion of ECEAP in a region does not leave open slots in current Head Start programs. ECEAP contractors work with neighboring Head Start grantees to create written agreements that fully describe enrollment and service areas. As the state reaches full capacity, it is assumed waiting lists will diminish. ECEAP and Head Start currently use waiting lists as a factor to show need. Exploring this is important so that Washington maximizes the use of current federal Head Start dollars and does not disadvantage current Head Start grantees.
3. **Capacity and Expansion Mapping.** DEL will continue to work with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to annually survey current saturation, existing facilities and qualified staff, using data from MERIT, our professional development registry, and data about certificated P-3 and early childhood special education teachers in each region. DEL will consider loss of Head Start slots due to sequestration and re-competition, population shifts and contractor capacity as part of this process.

As the state moves toward entitlement, an approach for creating flexible capacity in communities will need to be developed. Economic forces such as the recent recession, the high cost of urban housing that is pushing low-income families into the suburbs, and shifting employment opportunities in rural areas cause changes in the number and location of eligible families. ECEAP expansion and annual planning must be flexible enough to adjust for the changes in potential participation locations and growth in the state's population.
4. **Start-Up Funding.** DEL will work with the Governor and the Legislature in 2014 to identify policy options and methods for securing adequate funds (including public-private funding initiatives) for program start-up costs.
5. **Mixed-Delivery Issues.** DEL is working to realize cost efficiencies to reach as many children as possible with high-quality preschool shown to improve children's learning and development. Replication of administrative and quality assurance structures in small individual programs costs considerably more than

in full classrooms. Larger programs can spread these costs across a number of settings. Administration of large numbers of small contracts is also more expensive for DEL. For these reasons, DEL has established a minimum of 240 slots (ECEAP and Head Start combined) for a new contractor.

However, DEL is supporting regional partners to explore shared service alliances and other ways of allowing smaller organizations to affiliate and serve as subcontractors. This facilitates the ability of smaller sites to participate and provides infrastructure and capacity so they can meet the comprehensive service and quality requirements of ECEAP. Smaller subcontractors may choose to join together to meet the minimum contractor size and share costs of required infrastructure to meet ECEAP Performance Standards as noted in the attached ECEAP Contractor and Subcontractor Pathways. DEL is committed to identifying the best ways to support this “affiliation” process.

Policy changes may be needed to attract child care providers into the ECEAP expansion. ECEAP is now a half-day program. Child care providers rated a level 3 through 5 in Early Achievers may be concerned about a disincentive for providing part-day ECEAP services, due to the perceived loss of the full-day child care subsidy for that child if that child does not stay for child care and access full-day services at that site.

The State Best Practices Brief (Appendix C) highlighted the challenges of integrating state-funded preschools in family child care settings. Only one state interviewed implemented state-funded preschool in family child care homes due to the cost, capacity and legal complexities involved. They also cited the difficulty of integrating these two models intended for different purposes. DEL will work to better understand the intricacies of integrating comprehensive preschool in family child care settings to ensure this model meets the needs of children and families, that implementation can be cost-effective and that appropriate supports to assure quality are well understood and provided.

6. **Future Funding Formula.** An analysis of cost variation will be completed in October 2014, drawing on the experiences of other states. This analysis will address unique cost drivers in different regions of the state and different service delivery system such as schools, community based-programs, licensed child care settings (centers and family homes), and large contractor with subcontractors. The analysis will allow DEL to answer the question: What is the most efficient and effective use of braided funding? It will also consider the interplay of potentially “stackable” funding formula elements such as base funding, regional cost adjustments, incentives for family child care settings, reaching remote populations and supplements for quality improvements.
7. **State Interest in Facilities.** Because some potential ECEAP contractors or subcontractors (for example, private preschools, private child care and family home child care providers) are private businesses, consideration is needed to secure any appropriate state interest resulting from investment in facilities owned by these entities. Also, because small businesses may close or change direction, the state will also need to consider ways to promote sustainability of services among these contractors and subcontractors.
8. **Cultural Competence.** DEL will continue to enhance the cultural competence of ECEAP services.
9. **Competency Assessment and Equivalency.** The goal of having 70 percent of ECEAP lead teachers obtain a bachelor’s degree by school year 2018-2019 as stated in the state’s 10-year Early Learning Plan runs the risk of eliminating capable teachers who understand and reflect the culture of the children they serve. DEL, policymakers and advocates will explore the potential for assessing attainment of the Washington

State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals and consider “equivalency” for experience, expertise and credentials obtained from other sources.

10. **Common Eligibility Requirements.** There have been continued legislative conversations about establishing a common eligibility standard for all early learning programs. There are many complexities to this issue, including: differing target populations (distinguishing services needed by All, Some and Few children per our state’s ten-year Early Learning Plan); intended outcomes (for example, child school readiness, therapeutic support for young children with disabilities); and allocation of available funds (for example, more intense services are more expensive and therefore less broadly available.) DEL is actively working on describing how eligibility and outcomes of different programs connect in an integrated system of high-quality early learning opportunities that families can choose. DEL will work with policy makers and other state and local agency partners to explore this idea, noting that the Early Learning Plan envisions raising the ECEAP level to the free lunch level of 130% of the FPL by the 2018-2019 program year. This would ease eligibility determination and serve more working poor families.

Appendix B: ECEAP Independent Evaluation Assessment Instruments

DEL and the research institution will review potential assessment instruments for cultural competency and overall relevance to the research design. The following assessment instruments are under consideration.

Learning Domain Assessments

Language

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP) is a norm-referenced instrument for measuring the receptive (hearing and understanding) vocabulary of children and adults. Children would be individually assessed in either standard American English or Spanish, if Spanish is their home language. The test content covers a broad range of receptive vocabulary levels, from preschool through adult. The items broadly sample words that represent 20 content areas (e.g., actions, vegetables, tools) and parts of speech (nouns, verbs, or attributes) across all levels of difficulty.

The OWLS-II Oral Expression scale measures the expressive language of children. This is an individually administered instrument during which the examinee responds verbally to questions about pictures that are presented to them.

Literacy (early reading and writing skills)

The Woodcock Johnson, Letter Word Identification subtest measures the ability to identify letters and words. Children are assessed individually. The child is not required to know the meaning of any words. The easiest set of items, intended primarily for preschool-aged children, requires the child to identify letters that appear in large type and then to pronounce simple words correctly.

The Woodcock Johnson, Spelling subtest asks children to write letters and words from dictation and measures early writing ability.

Math

The Woodcock Johnson (WJ III), Applied Problems subtest examines broad math and math reasoning. To solve the problems, the child is required to listen to the problem, recognize the procedure to be followed, and then perform relatively simple calculations. Children either give oral responses to questions read by the administrator or point to the correct answer on the testing sheet. The items in the scale measure the child's ability to identify information necessary to solve problems and to determine an appropriate strategy to solve the problem.

The Research-based Early Mathematics Assessment (REMA) assesses early mathematics ability in children measuring early numeracy, geometry, and spatial skills.

Emotional

The Emotion Recognition Questionnaire (ERQ) is a measure of how well a child can identify feelings/emotions (happy, mad, scared).

Physical

The Body Mass Index compares a child's weight to height, by age, to determine whether they are underweight, health weight, overweight, or obese.

Executive Function

- ▶ Head, Toes, Knees and Shoulders (HTKS) measures self-regulation and effortful control of impulses and actions. This measure requires the child to perform the opposite of a dominant response to various verbal instructions given by the assessor.
- ▶ The Pencil Tap task measures the executive function skills of paying attention and planning.
- ▶ The Dimensional Change Card Sort (DCCS) is an executive functioning assessment instrument, which requires attention shifting. The child is shown cards containing different shapes and colors and is asked to sort them on a certain dimension, and then shift to sorting on a different dimension.
- ▶ The Task Orientation Questionnaire (TOQ) is a rating scale completed by the assessor to report the child's ability to engage in activities throughout the testing session (maintain attention, effort, and regulation of behavior, among others).

Social

The Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales is completed by teachers and parents and measures children's:

1. Social Skills-Communication, Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Engagement, Self-Control.
2. Competing Problem Behaviors: Externalizing, Bullying, Hyperactivity/Inattention, Internalizing, Autism Spectrum.
3. Academic Competence: Reading Achievement, Math Achievement, and Motivation to Learn.

Secondary data

Researchers may review additional data such as WaKIDS child assessment scores, attendance, dosage (hours of participation), grade retention in K-12, special education services, class size/adult-child ratio, and bilingual status.

Parent Input

Parents may be surveyed regarding their opinions of the child's educational experience and child adjustment to school.

Classroom Quality Assessments

- ▶ The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) which focuses on teacher -child interactions, measuring the quality of teachers' social and instructional interactions with children, the intentionality and productivity evident in the classroom setting, and the classroom climate. It produces scores for emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support.
- ▶ The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) assesses classroom quality through observation and rates the following scales: space and furnishings; personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, parents and staff
- ▶ The Academic Snapshot, an observation tool used to learn about children's classroom experiences throughout the day.
- ▶ Curriculum Fidelity, which measures the extent to which a teacher is implementing curriculum as the authors intended and researched.
- ▶ The Language Environment Analysis System (LENA), which analyzes the use of language in the classroom, in relation to children's language development needs.

Appendix C: State Best Practices Brief

Lessons and Insights from State Preschool Expansion Efforts Key Findings from Interviews with Leaders in Six States

September 2013

Prepared for:

Washington State Department of Early Learning

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Introduction

Background

In June 2013, the Washington State Legislature passed [SB 5904](#) which specified:

- During the 2013-2015 biennium the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL), shall increase enrollments in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) by 10% from the 2011-2013 enrollments, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. (Section 1)
- During the 2013-2015 biennium reimbursement rates paid to early learning programs for ECEAP slots shall increase by 10% from the 2011-2013, subject to availability of appropriated funds. (Section 1)
- DEL and the Office of Financial Management shall develop an implementation plan for expanding ECEAP. This implementation plan must include the number of new enrollments requested for each year, a proposal for recruiting the necessary contractors and an oversight and evaluation design. This plan is due to the Legislature by September 30, 2013. (Section 2)
- The re-codification of [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 43.215.141](#), RCW [43.215.142](#) and RCW [43.215.143](#) under the ECEAP subchapter in RCW 43.215.400. These RCW's address program standards, funding and implementation law for voluntary preschool opportunities. (Section 5)

Senate Bill 5904 was designed to implement provisions of [HB 2731](#), which the Legislature passed in 2010. This law (as codified in RCW 43.215.141-143) mandates the creation of a voluntary comprehensive preschool program, offering early childhood education and family support for vulnerable three- and four-year-olds. It also mandates gradual enrollment increases in the early learning program until reaching full statewide implementation in the 2018-2019 school year.

DEL used this planning opportunity to articulate the expansion strategy for the current ECEAP model and to identify future actions that require additional exploration, analysis and vetting. The report to the Legislature will include this additional detail. As part of this work, DEL sought to learn from the experience of other states that have expanded their state-funded preschool programs. Leaders from six states were interviewed to identify the lessons and insights reflected in this key findings report.

Methodology

DEL identified research questions designed to elicit useful information about the choices that states made as they expanded state-funded preschool. Questions focused on what worked in expanding efficiently while maintaining program quality. Since most states also expanded their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) for licensed child care at the same time, one

research question focused on the connections between the monitoring and continuous improvement aspects of state-funded preschool and QRIS. This allowed DEL to learn if other states included state-funded preschool classrooms in non-licensed settings in their QRIS system. DEL focused on states that have experienced rapid expansion, serve large numbers of preschoolers, offer universal preschool and /or have remote and/or diverse populations similar to those in Washington.

National and state leaders¹ in preschool and early childhood education helped identify states with experience and insights particularly useful for Washington's effort. Phone interviews were conducted with eight leaders from Georgia, North Carolina, New Jersey, Michigan, West Virginia and Vermont. Each interviewee currently works for the government agency that oversees state preschool, has responsibility for shepherding the expansion process and/or works as an evaluator for the state preschool program. Because of the technical nature of the information sought and the tight timeline, additional interviews with other stakeholders were not conducted.

Confidentiality of Key Informants

To encourage key informants to share frank opinions that might be viewed as controversial or politically sensitive by some groups, interviewers put confidentiality agreements into place. As a result, notes from individual and group phone interviews with quotes and directly attributable information were not included in this report.

¹ Nationally, outreach was conducted with the National Institute for Early Learning Research, Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, the BUILD Initiative, and independent consultant Karen Ponder (formerly with Smart Start, North Carolina's early childhood initiative).

Key Themes

Overview

Common key elements between Washington and the states interviewed included having programs in remote and urban locations with cost differentials, using contractors and subcontractors to deliver services and having articulated links between preschool and child care monitoring and quality improvement. Although no one state completely mirrored Washington, each state offered valuable lessons and insights.

This Overview provides a snapshot of general themes and important advice. It also provides context about the different preschool programs in each state and touches on issues that are noteworthy but were not included in the key themes section.

Over the course of the interviews, key themes emerged around:

- Roles and functions that local-, intermediary- and state-levels performed utilizing existing infrastructure.
- Multi-faceted capacity development needs at each level.
- Service integration.
- Funding considerations.

These themes are explored in-depth in the following Key Themes section.

Other noteworthy issues discussed, but to a lesser degree and with less clarity, were:

- Sustainability issues as related to funding considerations.
- Prioritizing populations in expansion plans. Accurately forecasting the number of children eligible and likely to participate in a program.

These issues are discussed in more detail below.

State leaders shared the following advice about how to increase the sustainability of a state preschool system based on their experiences.

- Act as though funding was limited. Virtually all state leaders, regardless of whether their state had recently expanded their preschool program or was now receiving enhanced state funding, believed the threat of budget cuts within five years was very real.
- Leverage existing resources and assets. State leaders advised Washington to invest in quality improvement efforts that leverage existing resources (such as methods of monitoring through licensing) and community level assets (such as organizations that have proven they can reach targeted populations in culturally competent ways and intermediary entities that have the capacity and expertise to deliver professional development).

- Create broad buy-in. A broader base of supporters means more advocates would support the program. For example, in Georgia, preschool was universally available to all four-year-olds, though market capacity dictated availability (which was determined by how many slots the state would pay for in a budget cycle). Currently 84,000 preschool slots in Georgia serve 60% of the four-year-old population. This has created tremendous buy-in from middle to upper class families that serve as the public relations ambassadors for the program. Parent advocacy helped reduce a potential \$100 million budget cut to \$50 million.

Each of the six states differed in how they selected the eligible population to serve. Georgia and West Virginia make their programs universally available, while Michigan and North Carolina serve children based on family income levels. Michigan capped allocation in local areas and within those areas there was absolute eligibility (for example 0-50% FPL). They next prioritized eligibility based on income levels (the second tier of eligibility was 50-100% FPL, then 100-200% FPL, then 200-250% FPL). North Carolina used family income level as the primary eligibility factor (families at 75% of the state median income or approximately \$51,000 for a family of four are eligible). They also considered other risk factors if families exceeded the income threshold. New Jersey made preschool universally available to children who resided in 31 low-income school districts. Vermont allowed towns to determine if they wanted to offer the publicly-funded and universally-available preschool program.

Whether the program served universal or targeted populations, each state worked carefully to define the universe of preschools they were looking for. This proved a significant endeavor involving multiple data sources, including data collection from intermediary or local entities or both to help identify where children and capacity were located.

States had no common established system for ensuring they included prioritized populations in expansion plans. Yet some states prioritized funding allocation. For instance, one state used a formula to ensure every program received a base amount of funding then if money remained they made sure programs received the same level of funding they had the previous year. The methods states used to identify vulnerable populations included asking for specific data on the grant application (such as languages spoken in the home and income levels) and looking at specific data for the region (such as graduation and crime rates per region). When the state reviewed grant applications they factored these indicators in funding decisions.

Secondary to deciding the focus population for the preschool program was the issue of accurately forecasting the number of eligible children likely to participate in different parts of the state. Interviewees offered two suggestions for how Washington could identify need.

- Use kindergarten enrollment information to identify low-income kindergarten students with younger siblings. Michigan created flexibility to provide school-day programs at elementary schools so families with an older child could have both children at the same location, making accessibility easier.

- Use first grade free- and reduced lunch data to approximate how many three- and four-year-olds from low-income families were in the district. States used first grade rather than kindergarten data, as not every kindergartener attended full day kindergarten (thus not eating lunch at school) and not all states mandate kindergarten attendance.

Key Findings

1. Availability of adequate facilities and qualified staff were key capacity considerations.

Issues related to capacity dominated the conversations. State leaders advised Washington to consider availability of adequate facilities and the education levels of the existing workforce when setting quality standards and expansion targets. They also counseled putting particular effort into strengthening collaborative relationships with the K-12 and higher education communities to increase communication, align policies and plan for needed capacity. For example, state leaders recommended aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten entrance expectations, planning for the use of K-12 classroom space and planning for increased demand of certain higher education coursework based on preschool teacher credential requirements.

In most states, schools provided some or most of the classroom spaces needed to serve children in publicly funded preschools. If states place preschool classrooms in operational public elementary schools, there will be little if any additional costs for utilities. Preschool programs might contribute a small amount for janitorial services. However, placing preschool classrooms in the most run-down, technically deficient schools or in a dark church basement would cost a lot of money to reach the preschool standard. Such poor work environments might also lower staff morale and discourage families from sending their children to the preschool. Placing preschools in a high school or other school building might also incur additional costs, such as installing a playground appropriate for preschoolers.

For preschools based in school buildings, state leaders advised tracking K-12 policy closely to monitor what factors impacted K-12 facility use and human capital. For example, an education reform that required more funding, could potentially impact whether schools would subsidize preschool teacher's salaries. One state expanded full-day kindergarten (FDK) and prioritized FDK over preschool classrooms, creating significant facility issues for the preschool program. This highlighted the importance of strong partnerships with the K-12 community to ensure increased communication.

The education level of the existing workforce also had implications for a state's readiness for expansion and raising staff qualification standards. State leaders agreed that teachers in preschool, Head Start and child care programs tended to have lower education levels than teachers in the public school system. If the preschool standard required all lead teachers to have a bachelor's level degree and perhaps a specialized endorsement, leaders also need to account for the time and expense required to increase the workforce's education level.

Most states emphasized that workforce development required extensive collaboration with scholarship support programs and partnerships with community colleges and universities. States must ensure the higher education system offers appropriate credential and degree programs and has adequate capacity to serve the increased demand. Some states put the teacher credential requirement in place before the higher education institutions could train the workforce. As a result, programs were already full or not widely nor intentionally aligned with the preschool program standards.

Georgia raised credential requirements once most of the workforce had achieved the previous level. When the program first started 20 years ago, a lead teacher was required to have a CDA and an assistant teacher, a high school diploma. As more lead teachers achieved a CDA and associate's level degrees, Georgia raised the credential bar, requiring lead teachers to obtain a bachelor's level degree. Similarly, Georgia now requires assistant teachers to have a CDA. These two changes happened within the past five years.

States noted salary disparity between preschool teachers based in child care programs and preschool teachers in school-based programs as a significant issue. In many cases school districts paid preschool teachers on the same pay scale as their K-12 teachers.² However, states that offered competitive salaries or salary parity with K-12 teachers could not always sustain this. If K-12 funding became strained, they reduced preschool teachers' salaries. In one state that experienced budget cuts, the state preschool program reduced the salary levels for preschool teachers working in public school classrooms, paying K-12 entry level salary and no incremental increases.

Most states, with the exception of Georgia, addressed the facilities and teacher education level issues by implementing a probationary period where programs could meet a minimum standard. This allowed them to have a certain amount of time to achieve compliance with the standards (such as allowing two years to get the classroom in compliance with standards or six years to ensure every lead teacher has a bachelor's degree).

2. Local-, intermediary- and state-level entities worked together to administer the program. The state set standards and rules, allocated funding, assured quality and continuous improvement and maintained oversight.

All states partnered with contractors to deliver their preschool services. Some states allowed sub-contracting. All but Georgia used intermediary entities such as school districts or community-based organizations (as discussed in key themes 3 and 4) to play a strong role in expansion planning, regional oversight and technical support.

In most states, the state agency focused primarily on:

- Setting standards and rules for the provider/program and system levels.

² This is not the case for Washington State.

- Monitoring and assessing how programs are doing in meeting standards and reaching quality improvement goals.
- Developing necessary supportive policy.
- Allocating funding.
- Supporting quality improvement efforts.

Examples of supports to programs provided by the state-level are: (1) training to preschool administrators at the intermediary and program levels on assessment tools; and (2) providing coaching to the intermediary and local levels on how to braid funding streams to provide wrap-around services.

Quality assurance most frequently happened at the state-level. The state might partner with an intermediary entity to provide monitoring and auditing of contractors and subcontractors. Quality assurance activities included ensuring programs were in compliance with standards related to teacher credentials, classroom ratios and use of approved curriculum.

The intensity of quality improvement work at the state-level varied and was impacted by the responsibilities of any intermediary entity. In Georgia the state-level (Department of Early Care and Learning) provided all the quality improvement support. In other states, quality improvement efforts were the responsibility of the state and intermediary levels (usually most heavily the intermediary level). Quality improvement activities included technical assistance, coaching, training and various professional development initiatives.

In many cases a state agency separate from the preschool program administered the state QRIS. The preschool program provided quality improvement efforts with minimal or no overlay of support from QRIS. In every state, leaders said the preschool quality standards were more rigorous than the QRIS standards (see key theme 6). Leaders from two states said they did not want to take resources from their state's QRIS since they believed infant and toddler child care needed quality improvement support more than the preschool providers.

In most states, the main day-to-day state-level administration work related to allocating funding and administering grants or contracts. However, Vermont and West Virginia included preschool in the public school budget and budget approval process. In some cases, states distributed funding directly to community level providers. In most cases, they directed it to an intermediary entity such as a school district or community-based organization. The latter provided some services but typically subcontracted most or all of the services to other providers such as center-based child care, Head Start programs and private preschools. In the case of Vermont, family child care homes are also included.

States set standards and rules, allocated funding functions, quality assurance and quality improvement and administered broad oversight. The intensity of state-level responsibility depended on the presence and authorized responsibility of any intermediary entity. The roles of the state versus an intermediary entity also impacted funding (see more in key theme 8).

3. Intermediary entities played critical roles in identifying local capacity, monitoring programs and providing quality improvement supports.

All states, with the exception of Georgia, used an intermediary entity with fiduciary responsibilities to carry out some program expansion planning and oversight functions. State leaders from Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Vermont and West Virginia said local and/or intermediary entities played important roles in the system. The fiduciary responsibilities at this level included identification of local need and capacity, such as locations of facilities and existing programs. These responsibilities also included articulation of grant requests or budget submissions to the state. Intermediaries often managed subcontractors, monitored compliance with standards and provided quality improvement supports such as training, technical assistance and coaching.

As noted in key theme 2, state and intermediary entities often divided duties, including different levels of oversight. For instance, both levels might support quality improvement but provide different kinds or different intensity of technical support. State-level experts in North Carolina did a speaking tour on funding streams to help contractors and subcontractors understand how to appropriately use multiple funding sources (for example Head Start, Title I and subsidy) to create a viable classroom. Michigan provided a large portion of state-level quality improvement support through cost-effective Internet-based resources while intermediary entities (54 Intermediate School Districts or ISDs) provided more intensive, hands-on training of classroom staff.

4. When states used intermediary entities, they were typically part of a connected or existing system – most commonly the public schools.

As noted in key theme 2, all states except Georgia used intermediary entities to support effective expansion and ongoing operations. In four states, school districts served as intermediary entities (Michigan, New Jersey, Vermont and West Virginia). North Carolina used a variety of intermediaries, including school districts, local Smart Start entities, and community-based organizations.

Depending on the number of districts and the size of the state, some leaders advocated using school districts because they:

- Provided an opportunity to build greater buy-in from the K-12 community.
- Provided easier access to existing facilities, such as classrooms in operational schools.
- Provided lower facilities costs, by filling a classroom in a school that already covered these expenses.
- Leveraged resources that schools have, such as nurses and playgrounds.
- Helped with program sustainability, as policy makers and the public were less likely to cut funding for a program seen as education.

- Potentially helped with per child funding levels and teacher salary parity issues. Leaders could use the opportunity to discuss why both were lower in preschool than in K-12 schools. (The exception was Vermont, which included preschool in the public school budget and had an \$8,900 per pupil funding rate for preschool through grade 12.)

Michigan, with more than 500 school districts, used 54 intermediate school districts for ease and efficiency of organizing and administering the program.³ The five states that used an intermediary entity said some or most of their contracts were for classroom-based preschool programs in public schools. (See more discussion below in key theme 6 on the value of and need for diverse service integration.)

5. Partnership efforts or authoritative bodies that provided checks and balances were often established at the local- or intermediary-levels.

Five states used a three-tiered system (state, intermediary, local or state, contractor, subcontractor). The intermediary-level authoritative bodies created a checks and balances effect. This created an additional level of accountability, coordination and collaboration beyond what occurred at the state level.

For example, North Carolina set up a regional planning structure from the beginning. The state created Local Planning Committees (LPCs) with defined membership. This included a requirement that the local superintendent or their appointee co-chair the LPC with the chairperson of the local Partnership for Children (aka local Smart Start entity). The LPCs identified capacity, including local contractors (such as the intermediary entity that subcontracted to early learning providers). A leader from North Carolina approximated in 54% of communities the contractor was the local school district and in 46% it was the local Partnership for Children.

In Vermont, towns decided if they wanted to provide publically-funded preschool. If they decided to offer it, the state required universal accessibility. The local school district factored preschool into their budget. If they contracted with community partners (such as Head Start, center-based child care, private preschool, or family child care homes), they included a line item in their budget for those contracts. The local school board approved budgets, allowing members of the public to weigh in.

6. Service integration with a variety of programs was crucial in order to meet capacity needs in terms of volume and community diversity.

All six states contracted or subcontracted preschool services to early learning programs including Head Start, center-based child care (corporate chains and individually owned centers) and private preschools (such as Waldorf, Montessori and part-day preschool programs).

³ Washington has 295 school districts.

States required programs to comply with their preschool standards, including getting licensed (which might mandate participation in the state QRIS) or being monitored by a different state agency. Georgia mandated teacher credentials (bachelor's degree and perhaps a specialty early childhood endorsement for lead teachers and an associate's degree or CDA for assistant teachers), classroom sizes (teacher to student ratio of 1:9 to 1:11) and the use of a state approved curriculum.

Only Vermont contracted with family child care providers. Other states said they did not use family child care providers due to difficulties implementing the preschool program in a family home environment and challenges with oversight. Many leaders said they could not implement a classroom-based program for limited ages (such as four-year-olds) in a family child care setting due to the mixed ages served and the lack of a classroom environment in a family home setting. Regarding oversight challenges, leaders cited the example of the delicacy in auditing a family child care owner's personal finances. One specific example noted was how to determine if snacks and supplies bought for students were also consumed by family members of the family home child care provider.

Two states initially considered including family child care homes. After analysis they decided it was not fiscally or programmatically possible due to high or complicated facility improvement costs (such as capital improvements made to an individual's home) and the inability to create a classroom environment (most states have a classroom-based model).

Most state leaders agreed that due to finite resources and increasing sustainability of the preschool program, they needed to make investments in programs that had the greatest chance of serving the desired population. They focused on the following potential providers that had facilities more likely aligned with preschool standards and organizational infrastructure that was able provide appropriate oversight, professional development and training:

- Head Start classes and classrooms in public schools (these had stronger connections with the Head Start and K-12 infrastructure and supports).
- Private preschools that served an existing preschool population with curricula in classroom settings.
- Center-based child care (these had facilities more likely to meet preschool standards and an organizational structure and enough staff to ensure coverage for professional development and training).

Leaders from two states noted that family child care might be the right option for providing services in some communities, such as remote communities, which lack licensed child care center options. Vermont had a foundation that provided mini-grants to non-public school programs that wanted to become community partners and offer publicly funded preschool.

All state leaders believed that flexibility was important in addressing capacity issues and in offering a choice for families.

7. Preschool quality standards and QRIS standards were related but different.

All six states noted they had very high preschool quality standards. In states with QRIS, leaders stated their preschool standards were more rigorous than their QRIS standards. In some cases, preschool programs participated in QRIS due to licensing requirements or preschool standard requirements (Vermont required preschool programs to maintain a three out of five star rating).

When determining how preschool quality standards and QRIS relate, state leaders focused on the following factors:

- Be mindful to not absorb monitoring and quality improvement resources from QRIS that would better serve infant and toddler child care programs.
- Collaborate closely with QRIS system builders to align policy and practice with preschool expectations. Collaborate closely with K-3 to ensure that child care and preschool standards are aligned with kindergarten entrance expectations.
- Have site visitors for preschool and QRIS share data, insights and lessons from their site visits with each other. For preschool evaluation, combine teacher observations with child assessment data to determine areas for needed improvement (such as math instruction, low student math scores and the need for professional development). Work with QRIS site visitors where appropriate to ensure leveraging of resources without duplication.

8. Program funding levels were impacted by how much support the state provided at the state- versus intermediary-level, the comprehensive nature of services, whether the program was in a school or private child care setting and geographical considerations (urban and rural).

Not surprisingly, the most complicated topic was funding. The range of funding among the six states ran from less than \$3,000 per child to nearly \$9,000. Some states had a formula to determine per-child funding with some flexibility to adjust for increased transportation costs and other factors. Other states factored the cost differentials for salaries and facilities (such as rent expenses for child care centers) into the grant applications submitted by individual programs. North Carolina gave LPCs flexibility in how they distributed their per-child dollars. For instance, if the LPC received \$100 for each child and the cost to place a child in a school-based preschool was \$50, the LPC could use the remaining \$50 to support a different child whose participation in a child care center might cost more than \$100, due to higher overhead costs.

Additionally, the type and duration of services covered by the per child amount varied from state-to-state. Vermont funded their public preschool for ten hours a week while New Jersey funded six hours a day.

Most state leaders said they needed to braid or layer funding sources (such as Head Start, Title I, public school dollars and child care subsidies) in order to cover the true cost of the comprehensive service requirements.

None of the states incentivized local in-kind or cash contributions, although states leaders said some programs chose to raise funding in their local communities. Vermont and West Virginia included preschool in the public school budget and counted preschool students in the school district census.

In states where an intermediary entity had responsibility for monitoring, quality improvement and other functions, the state assumed that funding would not cover the entire cost of the program. In cases (Georgia was the most extreme example) where the state agency (for education or early learning depending on the state) had primary responsibility for quality assurance and improvement, these costs were factored into the agency budget and not in the preschool provider budget.

9. Achieving aspects of cultural competence at the program-level happens through environmental rating scales, bilingual program standards and local hiring practices.

None of the six states had intentional, widespread efforts to ensure the preschool workforce reflected the ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children they served. Most noted they would like to do more in this area.

States used environmental rating scales to ensure the use of materials that reflected the culture of the community (such as a toy butter churner in the kitchen play area of a program in Amish country) and addressed bilingual program standards.

States also supported the practice of local hiring. As one leader stated, they did not recruit recent college graduates in the city to work in remote preschools. Preschools hired teachers and staff from the local community, better reflecting the students' backgrounds. Leaders from most states said staff at non-public school preschools (such as Head Start programs and child care centers) reflected more diversity than staff at public schools. One leader from Michigan said families and communities must trust and relate to the preschool staff in order to send their children to school there. As a result, preschool administrators made an intentional effort to ensure teachers and staff reflected the families' backgrounds.

10. Expect issues of ownership and turf to be a significant challenge.

Reflecting back on their expansion efforts, state leaders said overcoming the culture of perceived competitiveness for market share was a major challenge. State leaders described this as a "who owns the population" debate among stakeholders. In some states, the private child care community feared losing the students and families they served to state-run, classroom-based preschool programs. They also feared that state preschool standards would exclude

certain early learning providers from serving children they normally served in a child care setting and would lose business.

Additionally, leaders from North Carolina and Georgia advised working with Head Start from the beginning to avoid a competitive climate between Head Start and the state preschool program. They said that well-intended actions sometimes inadvertently had negative impacts on Head Start. For example, if children who received federal Head Start funds shifted to a state funded preschool program, the financial responsibility to the state would grow in potentially undesirable ways.

Initial tensions between early learning providers and the K-12 community ran high in states where preschool is classroom-based and when school districts served as intermediaries between the state and local program levels. These states ran some or most of the preschool out of school classrooms. Early learning providers expressed concern about losing the children they served to a state preschool program. They also expressed fear about meeting new standards, reporting and accountability requirements in order to participate in the state preschool program. In the cases where the local-level collaborative included both early learning and K-12 leaders as members, tensions began high as change occurred. But in all cases, leaders said that these tensions faded over time through intentional relationship- and trust-building efforts. Some leaders predicted tensions could flare up again if funding levels dropped. Thus, they highlighted the importance of strengthening collaborative relationships with the K-12 and higher education communities from the start (see key theme 1).

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for State Leaders

Phone Interview Questions Regarding Washington State ECEAP Expansion Strategy State Best Practice Research

INTERVIEW DETAILS

Key Informant Name(s)	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	
Interviewer	

INTRODUCTION

Due to a legislative mandate, Washington State’s comprehensive preschool program, known as the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program or ECEAP, is required to serve all eligible children in the 2018-19 school year. Three- and four-year-olds are eligible if their families earn less than 110% FPL; they are homeless or in foster care; and/or have a disability. As part of the establishment of an entitlement for these children, the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL) is required to submit an implementation plan to the Legislature on September 30, 2013.

To learn from the experience of other states, DEL has contracted with Dovetailing, LLC, a Seattle-based firm, to conduct research on state best practices for preschool expansion. Leaders from three to five states will be interviewed over the phone as part of this research.

National and state colleagues have identified your state as having experience and insights that might be useful for Washington’s effort. Notes from the interview will be kept confidential and maintained at the research offices and no quotes or directly attributable information will be shared. However, a brief detailing key insights and lessons from the phone interviews will be provided to Washington policymakers and other stakeholders.

DEL and ECEAP’s many stakeholders would appreciate your consideration of an interview. The interview will not require preparation ahead of time and should take about 50 minutes of your time. The questions are organized below by topic to quickly orient you. (The question(s) listed under each topic reflect information we are seeking for the purpose of this specific research rather than all the issues relevant to the topic overall.)

QUESTIONS

1. CAPACITY, POPULATIONS and INFRASTRUCTURE
 - a. How does your state identify the additional capacity (e.g., contractors, facilities and staff) needed as you set “expansion” targets?
 - b. How does your state ensure prioritized populations are included in expansion plans? (E.g. do you incentivize existing preschool providers to reach more remote communities?)

- c. How does your state distribute the necessary functions (e.g. program administration, planning, monitoring, quality improvement efforts) among the critical partners (e.g. state agency, regional collaborations, contractors and/or subcontractors)?

2. SERVICE INTEGRATION

- a. What kinds of different early learning programs (e.g. full-day center-based care, family child care homes, etc.) are your state preschool program integrated into?
- b. How do you ensure high-quality and adequate support (e.g. administrative, monitoring, etc.) of state preschool when it is integrated into these different types of early learning programs?

3. FUNDING FORMULA

How do you adjust for variable costs to deliver preschool services (e.g. higher labor and facility costs in urban areas, higher transportation costs and greater infrastructure bolstering needed in rural and remote areas)?

4. LOCAL SUPPORT

How do you incentivize “local contribution/in-kind funding” while not penalizing a community’s lack of local capacity or penalizing those who successfully cultivate in-kind support?

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

- a. How is quality improvement addressed in your state preschool program? (E.g., are there specific continuous quality improvement, or CQI, processes that occur at the program/classroom level? *Interviewer: Be sure to confirm state, contract, or program level.*)
- b. How do those efforts relate to your state’s QRIS for early learning programs? [Interviewer probe: Is the state preschool included in QRIS?]

6. CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Are there efforts your state takes to ensure the preschool workforce is reflective of the race, culture and linguistic backgrounds of the children they serve?

7. IN CLOSING

Overall, what have been the greatest challenges and opportunities with your state’s preschool expansion work?

Appendix D: Senate Bill 5904 text

Source: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2013-14/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5904.SL.pdf>

SENATE BILL 5904

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2013 2nd Special Session

State of Washington 63rd Legislature 2013 2nd Special Session

By Senators Hill, Hargrove, Litzow, and Billig

Read first time 04/09/13. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to high quality early learning; reenacting and
2 amending RCW 43.215.405; adding new sections to chapter 43.215 RCW;
3 creating new sections; recodifying RCW 43.215.141, 43.215.142, and
4 43.215.143; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that high quality
7 early learning opportunities are an important factor in lifelong
8 success. The legislature is committed to expanding high quality
9 evidence-based early learning opportunities in order to improve
10 educational outcomes. The legislature further finds that moving toward
11 effective and research-based practices are critical in achieving
12 educational and societal outcomes from early learning investments. The
13 legislature intends to continue improvements in early learning through
14 ongoing evaluation, application of emerging research, and enhanced
15 quality assurance. It is the intent of the legislature that additional
16 investments in early learning will be based on current information
17 regarding the most efficient, research-based, and cost-effective
18 investments.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) During the 2013-2015 biennium, the
2 department of early learning shall increase enrollments in the early
3 learning program established in RCW 43.215.400 by ten percent from the
4 2011-2013 biennium enrollments, subject to the availability of amounts
5 appropriated for this specific purpose. Rates paid for early learning
6 program enrollments must also be increased by ten percent from the
7 2011-2013 biennium during the 2013-2015 biennium, subject to
8 availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose. The
9 department of early learning shall continue to review and evaluate the
10 contracts used to provide the early learning program to ensure the
11 contractors are operating research-based programs in a cost-effective
12 manner.

13 (2) The department of early learning, along with the office of
14 financial management, shall develop an implementation plan for
15 expanding the early learning program established in RCW 43.215.400,
16 which will include, at a minimum, the number of new enrollments to be
17 requested for each year, a detailed proposal for recruiting the
18 necessary contractors, and an oversight and evaluation design. The
19 department of early learning must deliver this implementation plan to
20 the appropriate committees of the legislature by September 30, 2013.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) During the 2013-2015 biennium, the
22 Washington state institute for public policy shall conduct a
23 comprehensive retrospective outcome evaluation and return on investment
24 analysis of the early childhood program established in RCW 43.215.400.
25 To the extent possible based on data availability, the evaluation must:

26 (a) Assess both short-term and long-term outcomes for participants
27 in the program, including educational and social outcomes;

28 (b) Examine the impact of variables including, but not limited to,
29 program fiscal support, staff salaries, staff retention, education
30 level of staff, full-day programming, half-day programming, and
31 classroom size on short-term and long-term outcomes for program
32 participants;

33 (c) Report findings from a review of the research evidence on
34 components of successful early education program strategies;

35 (d) Examine characteristics of parents participating in the early
36 childhood and education assistance program; and

1 (e) Examine family support services provided through early
2 childhood programs.

3 (2) The institute shall submit a report to the appropriate
4 committees of the legislature by December 15, 2014.

5 (3) This section expires on December 31, 2014.

6 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.215.405 and 2010 c 231 s 7 are each reenacted and
7 amended to read as follows:

8 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in
9 this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450,
10 43.215.141 (as recodified by this act), 43.215.142 (as recodified by
11 this act), 43.215.143 (as recodified by this act), and 43.215.900
12 through 43.215.903.

13 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW
14 43.215.420.

15 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and
16 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as
17 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify
18 under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900 through
19 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department
20 under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

21 (3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on the
22 needs of the child and includes education, health, and family support
23 services.

24 (4) "Department" means the department of early learning.

25 (5) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten
26 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the
27 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department
28 of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is
29 eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a
30 federal or state program providing comprehensive services; a child
31 eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020;
32 and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the
33 department if the number of such children equals not more than ten
34 percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program.
35 Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with
36 the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children
37 from families with multiple needs.

1 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for
2 parents to:

- 3 (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;
4 (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting
5 skills;
6 (c) Further their education and training;
7 (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;
8 (e) Increase their self-reliance.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** RCW 43.215.141, 43.215.142, and 43.215.143
10 are each recodified as sections under the subchapter heading "early
11 childhood education and assistance program" in chapter 43.215 RCW.

Passed by the Senate June 28, 2013.

Passed by the House June 27, 2013.

Approved by the Governor June 30, 2013.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State July 1, 2013.

Appendix E: Senate Bill 5595 text

Source: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2013-14/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5595-S2.SL.pdf>

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5595

Chapter 337, Laws of 2013

63rd Legislature
2013 Regular Session

CHILD CARE REFORM

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/28/13

Passed by the Senate April 27, 2013
YEAS 38 NAYS 7

BRAD OWEN

President of the Senate

Passed by the House April 23, 2013
YEAS 58 NAYS 39

FRANK CHOPP

Speaker of the House of Representatives

CERTIFICATE

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5595** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

HUNTER G. GOODMAN

Secretary

Approved May 21, 2013, 3:01 p.m.

FILED

May 21, 2013

JAY INSLEE

Governor of the State of Washington

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5595

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2013 Regular Session

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Litzow, Darneille, Fain, Hargrove, McAuliffe, Harper, Nelson, Hobbs, Mullet, Frockt, Cleveland, Rolfes, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Kline, and Conway)

READ FIRST TIME 03/01/13.

1 AN ACT Relating to child care reform; adding a new section to
2 chapter 43.215 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration
3 date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.215 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The standards and guidelines described in this section are
8 intended for the guidance of the department and the department of
9 social and health services. They are not intended to, do not, and may
10 not be relied upon to create a right or benefit, substantive or
11 procedural, enforceable at law by a party in litigation with the state.

12 (2) When providing services to parents applying for or receiving
13 working connections child care benefits, the department must provide
14 training to departmental employees on professionalism.

15 (3) When providing services to parents applying for or receiving
16 working connections child care benefits, the department of social and
17 health services has the following responsibilities:

18 (a) To return all calls from parents receiving working connections
19 child care benefits within two business days of receiving the call;

1 (b) To develop a process by which parents receiving working
2 connections child care benefits can submit required forms and
3 information electronically by June 30, 2015;

4 (c) To notify providers and parents ten days before the loss of
5 working connections child care benefits; and

6 (d) To provide parents with a document that explains in detail and
7 in easily understood language what services they are eligible for, how
8 they can appeal an adverse decision, and the parents' responsibilities
9 in obtaining and maintaining eligibility for working connections child
10 care.

11 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1)(a) A legislative task force on child
12 care improvements for the future is established with members as
13 provided in this subsection.

14 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from each
15 of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

16 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint two
17 members from each of the two largest caucuses in the house of
18 representatives.

19 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
20 representatives shall appoint fifteen members representing the
21 following interests:

22 (A) The department of early learning;

23 (B) The department of social and health services;

24 (C) The early learning advisory committee;

25 (D) Thrive by five;

26 (E) Private pay child care consumers;

27 (F) Child care consumers receiving a subsidy;

28 (G) Family child care providers;

29 (H) Child care center providers;

30 (I) Exempt child care providers;

31 (J) The collective bargaining unit representing child care
32 providers;

33 (K) School-age child care providers;

34 (L) Child care aware;

35 (M) The Washington state association of head start and the early
36 childhood education and assistance program;

37 (N) The early learning action alliance; and

(0) Puget Sound educational service district.

(b) The task force shall choose its cochaairs from among its legislative leadership. The members of the majority party in each house shall convene the first meeting.

(2) The task force shall address the following issues:

(a) The creation of a tiered reimbursement model that works for both consumers and providers and provides incentives for quality child care across communities;

(b) The development of recommendations and an implementation plan for expansion of the program referred to in RCW 43.215.400 to include a mixed delivery system that integrates community-based early learning providers, including but not limited to family child care, child care centers, schools, and educational services districts. Recommendations shall include:

(i) Areas of alignment and conflicts in restrictions and eligibility requirements associated with early learning funding and services;

(ii) A funding plan that blends and maximizes existing resources and identifies new revenue and other funding sources; and

(iii) Incentives for integrating child care and preschool programming to better serve working families;

(c) The development of recommendations for market rate reimbursement to allow access to high quality child care; and

(d) The development of recommendations for a further graduation of the copay scale to eliminate the cliff that occurs at subsidy cut off.

(3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(4) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than December 31, 2013.

(5) This section expires July 1, 2014.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The legislature finds that the Aclara group report on the eligibility requirements for working connections child care which came from the pedagogy of lean management and focused on identifying and eliminating nonvalue added work should be followed. The legislature further finds that, following some of the

1 recommendations in the report, would result in simplifying and
2 streamlining the child care system to improve access and customer
3 service without decreasing the program's integrity.

4 (2) By December 1, 2013, the department and the department of
5 social and health services shall accomplish the following:

6 (a) Eliminate the current custody/visitation policy and design a
7 subsidy system that is flexible and accounts for small fluctuations in
8 family circumstances;

9 (b) Create broad authorization categories so that relatively minor
10 changes in parents' work schedule does not require changes in
11 authorization;

12 (c) Establish rules to specify that parents who receive working
13 connections child care benefits and participate in one hundred ten
14 hours or more of approved work or related activities are eligible for
15 full-time child care services; and

16 (d) Clarify and simplify the requirement to count child support as
17 income.

Passed by the Senate April 27, 2013.

Passed by the House April 23, 2013.

Approved by the Governor May 21, 2013.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State May 21, 2013.